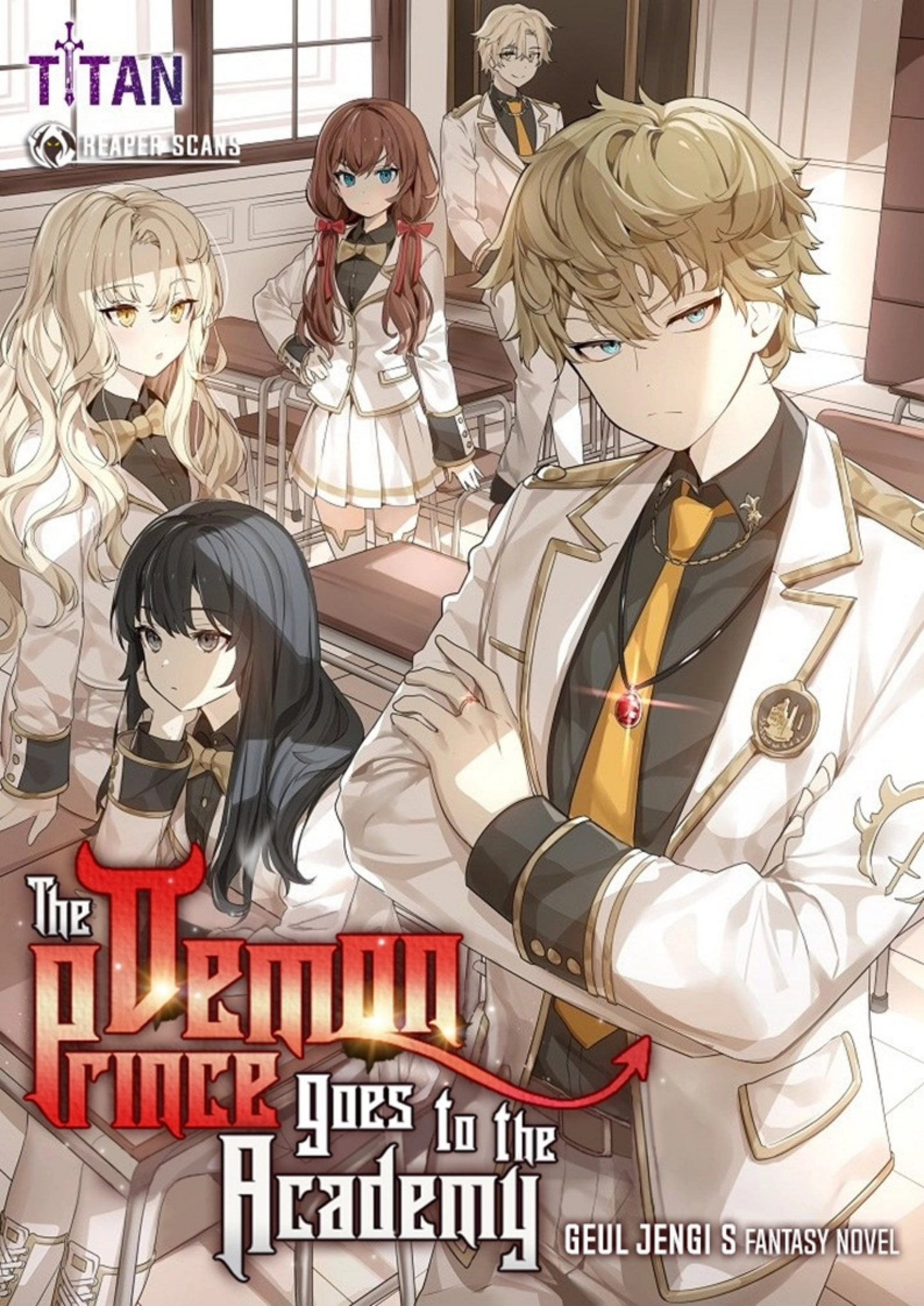
TITAN
REAPER SCANS
The Demon Prince goes to the Academy
GEUL JENGI S FANTASY NOVEL

THE DEMON PRINCE GOES TO THE ACADEMY

–마왕은 학원에 간다 –

- VOLUME 1 -

-AUTHOR-

Geul Jengi S

-ILLUSTRATOR-

RONOPU

[REAPER SCANS]

– STORY –

[The Demon King is Dead] is a story in which the Demon King was immediately killed off in the Prologue.

And I became the 'Demon Prince' of said novel.

…Help me.

– GENRE –

Action Adventure Comedy Drama Fantasy Harem Psychological Romance School Life Tragedy

CHAPTER 1

There was a saying that if you've committed a crime, you'd absolutely get punished. It's a saying that almost never came to fruition.

There was another saying.

If you were to go to hell you'd have to pay for all your wrongdoings, no matter how small. Of course, I didn't agree with that one either.

This wasn't really a saying and more of something I experienced myself.

If a situation was just too incomprehensible, a person's thought process would turn rather simple.

In a certain office, I was forced to make a certain choice by some sour-faced woman wearing a suit.

It was rather complicated, so let's put it simple.

Simply put.

This thing called Hell existed and I think I died.

The cause of my death was also rather simple.

It was 'Acute myocardial infarction due to high blood pressure, which caused a cardiac arrest'.

My blood pressure suddenly went up like this, because of a malicious comment I was reading. That's what I've been told.

My blood pressure went up because of some bad comment? Just for that reason? Really?

My eyes grew a bit distant.

That's supposed to be my last memory?

“Please sign this quickly.”

She threw a form in front of me. There was some stuff written on it, with a blank space presumably for my signature below.

“……So, I’m dead? I, I just saw some malicious comments which made my blood pressure rise and then I just died? People can die like this?”

“Do people always have to die for great reasons? There are a lot of people who die just by slipping on an icy road. Alright, hurry up and make your choice now.”

Even if I didn’t want to believe it, I didn’t have a choice in that matter.

…….Anyway, I was in hell now.

It was up to myself if I took the deal or just went right down.

I just had to sign.

I was forced to make a choice that I never thought I’d ever have to make.

There were some lines written on this form that I was more than familiar with.

[The City of the Dead]

[Surviving in the Ruined World]

[The Hunter became a Manager]

[The Trash returned]

[Somehow, the Game became Reality, but I’m just a Janitor]

[The Demon King is Dead]

These were all titles of novels I wrote.

My charges were ‘Being a repeat offender’ and ‘Having no prospects at all’.

For that I was to be sent into the world of one of the novels I wrote.

“So, I’ll get sent into one my novels?”

“Yes. As to which character or novel you’ll inhabit is up to chance.”

Shit.

I should have written more peaceful novels.

* * *

This was the explanation I got from this person I presumed to be a Grim Reaper or a Hell’s Employee.

Every single person sinned.

Except for very rare cases, no one immediately got sent to heaven. That’s why everyone goes through the process of atoning for the petty sins one had accumulated through their life.

Additionally, since there were a multitude of different sins, the method for atonement differed from person to person.

I was a novelist.

A web novel author who somehow managed to make ends meet with novels one could describe as second- or third-rate.

My biggest sin was leaving behind a lot of work throughout the years as a commercial writer.

I told the readers who were reading my stories well that it was a writer’s biggest sin to leave a story unfinished, before calmly digging up my sub-account to publish other works.

“To be honest, sins committed by individuals are often only on the minor side, but if the number of these small sins accumulate, don’t you think the scale of said sins would increase?”

“Ah, yes…”

Was it decided by simple arithmetics? Was that really okay?

Honestly though, just listening to her voice sent a shiver down my spine.

The bitter voice coming out of the Grim Reaper's mouth seemed to directly pierce through my heart. This was on a completely different scale than normal bitterness.

What if my blood pressure rose again? What would happen if I died again after I already died?

My sins were just small ones that accumulated throughout my life.

Anyway, the punishment I had to endure was being sent into a random character of a novel I wrote and surviving until the 'end'.

If I manage to do that, I'd get sent to heaven.

Apparently there were a lot of people that just got sent straight to hell, so I had it good, that's how the Grim Reaper tried to console me, though that didn't really work.

"As it is a novel you wrote, wouldn't you know everything about it and what would happen in it? This can't even be called a punishment, now can it? In fact, wouldn't it be rather easy for you?"

The Grim Reaper didn't even look at me as she nonchalantly said this to me.

"No, see. That depends on the novel…"

"Why?"

"Well, I, uh…… I only wrote novels in which a lot of people die……"

"Well congrats then. Think of it as a trivial punishment for your disregard of life then. It seems you don't understand the preciousness of life."

You bastard, it's not like I killed anyone in reality, now did I?! It's just fiction!

No, if I actually knew I'd one day have to live in one of the worlds I created, I certainly would have written something with a dreamland amusement park as the setting, wouldn't I?

How should I have known that I'd get punished for writing things like that, but who'd write a novel with that in mind in the first place? Who'd write about a master gunsman in their novel and didn't give him a gun?!

This was all just in my head! Just because I wrote down I could punch as fast as lightning, didn't mean I actually could pull that off.

On top of that, I was afflicted with a minor case of pretentiousitis, so I wrote a lot of stories about disastrous situations in which a lot of people died. To add to that, I was addicted to writing bad endings to the point that people said that, if one of my stories had a happy ending, I'd have gone crazy.

Maybe my real sin was that I messed with my readers' feelings with my bad endings all year round.

No, wasn't that actually rather convincing?

So what actually were the novels I wrote?

What would happen to me if I were transported into one of them?

[City of the Dead]

A zombie novel.

I was quite sure I'd die in a single day.

[Surviving in the Ruined World]

Post-Apocalypse.

I was here in hell because I couldn't even survive in our peaceful, normal world, you know? Didn't I just get killed by some malicious comments?

[The Demon King is Dead]

This novel got the worst ratings, but in my opinion it was the best.

Because this was a slice-of-life novel.

As I was criticized by my readers for always writing bad ends, I wrote this novel that didn't have any serious global crisis from beginning to end. I actually didn't finish it, but the beginning was rose-colored, very refreshing and peaceful.

This novel told the story of what happened after the heroes defeated the final boss in the prologue.

That's why its title was 'The Demon King is Dead'.

This story took place after the death of the Demon King after all.

At least it's not like my other stuff, where one had to fight for one's survival from start to finish.

I must get this one. No matter what.

I just had to get this one!

Speaking of the results.

It worked out just the way I wanted.

As a result of a random lottery, I was to become the "Demon King's son" of [The Demon King is Dead].

* * *

The Demon King's son wasn't a character that even made an appearance in my novel in the first place.

She told me that I'd get put into a random character, however I actually got something that couldn't even be called a character.

An unlucky person would break their nose even if they fell backwards, huh.

That's what she told me.

Didn't I just die because I got too mad about some comments which led my blood pressure to rise?

Just as I was relieved that I drew the safest novel, I got put into a position in which I'd die right at the start!

I wouldn't even be the Demon King, but just a prince.

It would have been much better if I were the Demon King. For example, if I were the Demon King I'd also be the highest-level existence of the Demon realm, so I could have just stayed put, surrendered or ran away.

Even though the Demon King dies right at the start, he's not to be trifled with.

However, I was just a prince of the Demon Realm who just turned 17.

Valier Jr.

Age : 17

Status : [Force: 3.4(F)]

[Agility 4.3(F+)]

[Dexterity 5.2(D-)]

[Magic power 9.9(C-)]

[Strength 5.7(D-)]

Race : Arcdemon

Talent : None

Abilities

[Demon Domination D](Unique to Arcdemons)

Comprehensive Ability Assessment – Lowest Rank Demon

Combat Level Assessment – F

Despite getting deceived by this novel, fortunately I was still able to find out who I

actually was. A game-like screen appeared before me.

I never put this setting into my novel, so was this something those guys who sent me here gave me out of pity?

So, in terms of tropes, I was in a fairly common situation, in which an author somehow ended up in his own novel with a game system.

However, no matter how common the trope was, it would never feel like a familiar situation if it suddenly happened to oneself in reality.

I didn't appreciate this convenient ability in the slightest.

Shouldn't the kin of the Demon King be of a different caliber?

Arcdemon was a rather simple species, but wasn't my current condition basically the worst of the worst?

This guy had no fighting capabilities.

I saw something that seemed like an ability to rule over all demons, but all around me were just dead demons.

What a hellish situation.

It was the start of the prologue.

[Event Quest: Downfall]

[Description : The defeat of the Demon King's army is imminent, but you're powerless to do anything. Do your best to survive.]

[Goal : Escape the Demon King's Castle]

[Reward : 100 achievement points]

All I could do was run.

I didn't even pay attention to that mysterious system window that appeared in front of me.

-Kabaang! Bababaaang!

“Crazy!”

There’s nothing I could do to stop the war.

It seemed like the Demon King and the hero’s party were already fiercely fighting inside the Demon King’s Castle.

The violent explosions and thunderous roars made me realize that this bloody war was really happening.

Outside, there were shouts, screams and cries of monsters as a siege was taking place. They seemed to have already broken through.

The hallways were already lined with dead or fallen demons.

I couldn’t even imagine a person dying in front of me, but it was even worse seeing monsters that have only existed in my head previously dying right there.

Still, maybe because I felt like death was imminent, I kept running.

I thought I’d die if I stopped to vomit.

Aren’t I such a good prince of the Demon Realm?

“Damn iiiiiiiit!”

However, having this title while the Demon Realm was falling apart was much more dangerous!

I’d rather replace it with Human Soldier 1!

I’m really confident that I can switch sides and bow down to whoever!

CHAPTER 2

In this slice-of-life novel I've written, I was experiencing the most violent event as an involved party, to be exact, as a victim.

Strange letters I didn't recognize were carved into the walls above each entrance to the numerous rooms of the Demon King's castle. However, I was able to read them.

Although this, too, was a common setting, it still felt uncomfortable, maybe because I was experiencing it myself.

You didn't know how it felt to suddenly be able to read letters you were unfamiliar with, until you experienced it yourself.

I passed by numerous rooms, including the dining hall, the kitchen, the armory, the magic item storage, the alchemy lab, the prison and the kennel.

Of course, there were no signs pointing to a secret passage or something.

I mean, it would have been weird If they put something like that on display, but couldn't they at least mark it like an emergency exit?

I must say, it felt really strange being able to read a language I have never heard of before, but that couldn't be helped now.

Naturally, the layout of the Demon King's castle, which never appeared again after the Prologue, didn't magically appear in my head!

In those other possession stories, when a writer or an avid reader entered the book's world, they immediately knew what to look for.

That was just ridiculous!

I didn't have a single clue about these things, even though I wrote it!

I've never thought about stuff like that. Why should I describe or imagine places that weren't part of the main stage?!

Although, I'm pretty sure I wouldn't have remembered the layout even if I set it up properly!

Even the things I was wearing were just those fancy clothes the demonic royal family wore, not a single special magical item.

-Kugong! Kugogogong!

This place was as complex as a maze… I didn't know if I'd ever find an exit, but in this situation I had no other choice, but to just wander around through this castle even though I hold the title of Prince of the Demon Realm.

Let's think.

I didn't really know what I was hoping would happen, but I had to think.

There's no way to find out the structure of the Demon King's castle no matter how long I thought about it, as I didn't even know it to begin with.

I didn't even see any of my loyal subordinates that could help me out or tell me where to go.

Shouldn't there be someone like this sticking to my side?

They'd provide explanations on this world's common sense and the current situation without being prompted to.

Something like: "Oh, this is this and that, but in this and this situation, this is where you'd blah, blah!"

They'd either die right after they fulfilled their role or they became my advisor!

Why didn't I have someone like that?!

Just because I was this novel's writer, did they think I didn't need someone like that?

The Demon King would die in today's battle.

I didn't know if there was a genre for this, but I tried writing this novel in the style of a Post-ending story.

A happy world after the story came to its conclusion.

The part where everyone lived happily ever after, after defeating the Demon King.

The world after the story of the heroes' journey to defeat the Demon King came to its conclusion after his death.

That's the stage of [The Demon King is Dead].

The hero and his party, who were the protagonists of the imaginary original story, are supposed to die here as well.

Like this, the only way they get mentioned in the story is when they get praised as the heroes who saved the world. Except in the Prologue, they didn't have any other appearances.

I had to come up with something.

I had to come up with a way for me to survive.

It had nothing to do with me that the Demon King, who was only my father, would die in this setting.

If I was just a day earlier I could have maybe done something, but things were already set in motion.

I needed someone to guide me, anyone who recognized me would do, the Demon King's attendant, anyone, but I didn't even catch the glimpse of a single hair of someone like that.

They might already be dead or locked in battle with the human forces trying to besiege the castle outside.

And the hero party who infiltrated through the castle's basement should've been fighting with the Demon King in the audience hall.

I could escape using that underground passage, but I had no idea where it was.

The hero knows this Castle better than me, the Demon Prince! That was my situation!

-Ruuuumble!

Just the sounds coming from the main stage were really terrifying.

After the Demon King died, the castle would fall.

The strong magic barrier that was supported by the Demon King's Mana would be lifted, and human soldiers would rush in here like surging waves.

I couldn't look in the mirror, but I could feel a pair of horns on my head.

I didn't know how different I looked from humans, but this alone was enough to reveal that I was a demon.

How was I supposed to survive in a situation like this?

No matter how much you knew what was going to happen in the future, what's the point of that if you were born right before a truck drives you over?

The Title of Demon Prince and the advantages I actually had were only useful if I was alive!

I only found out that I died a few hours ago, but here I was already on the verge of dying again.

"Hah… Haah…"

I was already out of breath, because I ran around the Demon King's castle without knowing where I was.

Wasn't there anything special about the Demon King's bloodline?

Or was it because I was still so young?

No, this body was just hella weak.

How could I be 17 and have such poor stamina? This body should be in its prime!

I have no idea what talents this blood brought with it, but for now it was clearly useless.

After running for some time, I finally was able to see my own face reflected in a window.

I looked at it, but it didn't seem much different from a human's.

I had horns on my head though.

No.

These horns were the only thing that stood out besides…

I looked quite handsome.

"Oh, oh… Oh!"

Handsome.

No, now wasn't the time for this. Absolutely not.

It was all over if I died!

To think I'd feel even the slightest bit of happiness in this kind of situation…

I felt more miserable about getting happy. I tried to endure not to shout out in fear or joy.

If I survive this place, I'll treat this body preciously. I wish I could show my ex-girlfriend my current body, though I won't be able to see her ever again…

Let's calm down for now.

First, the horns.

The horns on my head were a problem.

If the human army caught me like this, I should be grateful if they just quietly cut my head off.

There's a good chance they'd do even worse.

If I knew how to use magic, maybe I could have changed my appearance with magic.

Huh?

I suddenly stopped running.

“That place!”

I quickly turned around and ran back.

That method might be surprisingly simple. So simple, one could call it ridiculous.

Although I had no clue about the Demon King’s castle’s layout, I definitely remembered the places I passed by.

Although I didn’t know what’s in those rooms or what I could do in them.

In the places I passed by, there might be something that could save me somehow.

-Rumble…

The quaking was starting to abate.

It seemed like the fight had stopped.

If the Demon King died, the castle would fall immediately.

I had no time to lose.

* * *

“Quickly… Quickly…”

The first place I went into was the magic item storage.

I didn’t have a clue what was in there, but there had to be something in there that could help me out.

There were a lot of magic items rolling around, but those weren’t things I wanted.

I went to the scroll storage where scrolls were piled up to the ceiling. There were some missing, but fortunately they were ordered and had the spells they contained written on them.

The thing I was looking for was none other than a teleport scroll.

Getting out of this place somehow was my top priority.

I didn't know what I'd do next, but that was something to think about after I got out of here alive.

[Inferno]

[Glacial Strike]

[Blizzard]

[Blazing Storm]

.

.

.

There was a scroll cabinet that was apparently once full of powerful magic scrolls, but now it was empty.

As a writer, there were many things I had no idea about, but I did know about this world's common sense and world view.

Scrolls that made it easy to cast spells were sinfully expensive and difficult to make.

Scrolls containing such powerful attack magic were being treated as powerful strategic weapons by modern standards.

Scrolls could even be used by those who didn't know how to use magic simply by opening them.

So they were worth their price.

However, currently, the magic scroll cabinet that contained those powerful magic scrolls was empty.

We were in the state of an all out war now after all. They took whatever they could with them.

Damn it, what if they took all the teleportation scrolls with them? I don't know how they were going to use them, but that was definitely a possibility.

I searched the huge scroll storage and looked through countless scrolls.

I didn't have much time.

Most of the attack magic scrolls got taken out, but the storage was still overflowing with scrolls.

There were some so small, I couldn't even tell what magic they contained.

Many subtype scrolls were left behind, such as fascination, delusion, illusion etc.

Obviously teleportation was one of the highest leveled magic spells in this world.

Teleport scrolls weren't common, but this was the Demon King's castle, for crying out loud.

And after looking at that highest-level scroll cabinet just now, it was pretty clear that they should have teleport scrolls as well.

"Found it!"

Among the pile of countless scrolls, I finally found it.

[Teleport]

I didn't really know where to go.

I'll just think about where to go after I cast the magic.

As long as it wasn't this place, I was fine with anywhere.

Even somewhere in the human realm was fine.

It may have taken me 10 minutes or maybe an hour to find this, but death came closer with each passing second, so I just opened the scroll quickly.

And then.

Nothing happened.

[Teleporting is forbidden in this area.]

“Oh my god!”

The barrier made it impossible to use space related skills or magic that moved one through space inside of it.

Even Though the Demon King was dead, was the barrier that interrupted space travel still active?

Well, if that weren’t the case the heroes would’ve just teleported in and wouldn’t have used a secret passage.

I tried to justify my thoughtless rough writing.

The heroes didn’t have to teleport, they just entered the Demon King’s castle through a secret passage.

Wasn’t it obvious? If they could teleport, why would they use a secret passage?

There should’ve been that kind of comment.

If someone commented something like this while I was still alive, I wouldn’t have gotten punished like this.

I didn’t know about warp gates, but teleport scrolls were out of question now.

There might be such a gate somewhere, but even if there was, I wouldn’t know where it was.

-Waaaaaaah!

Shouts began to echo from afar.

The human army must be pushing the demon army back, after their morale had fallen to the bottom, like autumn leaves.

Should I just die like this?

If I just had some offensive magic scrolls here, I'd have bought time with those.

However, there were only auxiliary magic scrolls, that had no use in war, here.

I was the Prince of the Demon Realm, but I turned out to be some loser dog with no power.

The fancy clothes I wore on my body were only to show that I was the main character of the Demon Realm……

A minute later.

Fancy clothes.

My appearance as a Demon.

And.

Magic scrolls scattered around the floor.

There was still one straw I could grab onto.

* * *

I didn't know if this would work, but that was the only thing left I could do now.

There might be other methods, but to survive, I had to gamble with my life anyway.

In this situation in which I was completely surrounded and didn't know the location of the secret passage, I had only one goal. To survive.

Where I arrived was.

“Haah… Haah…”

The [Prison]

As I descended to this dark, moldy smelling place, I threw away all my clothes and went in naked.

It would have been nice to just have a few extra scrolls with me, but I had to gamble and throw everything away.

If I had something with me, that would have been too suspicious.

The magic spell I wanted to use was a low-level one.

However, in my situation it was the most fitting spell. One, my plan wouldn’t work without.

[Casting Camouflage Magic.]

I changed my appearance.

I disguised myself as a human prisoner caught by the Demons.

CHAPTER 3

The huge confinement facility was in the form of a prison. I couldn't help but be speechless at the disgusting stench and horrifying sight in front of me.

If what I'd seen up until now were the corpses of demons that got attacked by the heroes that infiltrated the castle, then what was found here were…

All corpses of humans.

"Urg…"

There were no guards, but it looked like they had just killed all the prisoners before they went to the battlefield. I felt vomit coming up, but I held it in.

Most of them were horribly torn to shreds. They were disastrous corpses. I couldn't even tell what they were subjected to.

I didn't have any time to hesitate, but my hands and feet just couldn't stop trembling.

There was, of course, a difference between writing something and seeing something in person. The unrecognizable, torn corpses were very hard to look at.

There was a mixture of blood and feces everywhere.

Someone died right outside an open cell door, perhaps they tried to escape.

It looked so bad that I didn't even want to look at it.

I was on the verge of cussing myself out.

This was what I was looking for.

"God fucking damn it… damn it…"

Were the sins I committed in my previous life so great?

To the point that I had to strip off the clothes of corpses whose shapes were unrecognizable just to survive?

I put down my fancy clothes to pick up rags and wear them. I stripped the rags from a corpse that should be called pieces of flesh rather than a corpse. I couldn't afford any unnecessary pride so I took off my underwear as well and rolled around on the dirty floor with the rags on.

The feeling of having sticky blood on my face was terrible.

I had no opportunity to look in a mirror, but I must have looked terrible. In the end, I couldn't take it anymore and kneeled over.

"Huueewek!"

I gagged, but nothing came out. I could hear shouts coming from outside that seemed like distant echoes.

With this my preparations were completed.

I could either go into a prison cell in a corner and lock myself in or I could pretend that I managed to escape.

From now on, all I could do was pray that no one could look through my camouflage magic.

By the way, who the hell was I supposed to pray to?

Shit.

I wandered around the prison cell in a miserable mood. The prison cell, which was previously filled with so many people to the point of bursting, now housed nothing but corpses.

Did they have to kill them all?

Is that what demons are like?

And.

-Sob. Sob, sob…

I could hear someone crying somewhere.

There were survivors.

I didn't know who, but someone was still alive here. I instinctively moved towards that place. Fear rose, but I couldn't help, but go look. My body moved faster than I thought.

Before anything else, I thought I should help whoever was alive in this horrifying place. These sentiments also gave me a sense of relief as it was proof that I was still a normal person.

"Wh, who…… Is anyone there…?"

– Urg… Sob. sob……

It was a very quiet, powerless, fragmented cry, like the cry of a small animal.

I passed by a few gruesome sights showcased in the prison cells.

"Sob… uuh… hnng…"

Soon, I could see a little girl crying in a cracked voice, hugging something shaped like a human.

I could roughly guess what kind of situation this was.

There was also a mass of bodies and flesh scattered about.

I hated to assume this, but judging by the remains, there seemed to have been five of them there. The crying girl not included. She was crying while hugging a corpse with an uncertain form, as if she didn't even realize I was in front of her.

I couldn't even tell how that corpse died or how this child survived.

However, the only thing I could tell was that this corpse the girl was holding was probably someone precious to her.

"Hey, calm down…"

"…Urg, sob! Don't!"

Only after I knocked against the cage did the girl lift her head and look at me.

Although she was covered in blood, I could tell that she had blonde hair and golden eyes. She was very skinny.

The girl looked at me, got startled and pulled back.

"H, huh! Wh, wh…… Who. Who, how……"

"Ah, do, don't worry! I… I was stuck here too!"

The girl was mumbling gibberish as if she lost all her reason.

"I, I…… I'll get you out. Let's get out of here."

The girl's eyes were filled with fear and sadness. She seemed to think of something as she looked at me, a person in rags like her.

The girl looked at my eyes, arms and legs.

She was looking at me who was terrified by these harrowing sights I was never exposed to before. Then the girl nodded slowly and softly.

She was shaking, but it felt like she had chosen to believe me. As if she had no other choice but to trust me, when she suddenly encountered me in this incomprehensible environment.

Did she believe I was in the same situation as her, because I was affected by these sights? This was only possible because I wasn't a Demon Prince at my core.

"Hey, do you know where the keys are? I'll bring them over."

"M, maybe…… The, there……"

Without a word the girl pointed to the other end of the prison.

It's true that I felt compelled to save this child.

However, it was also true that I had these calculating thoughts that my chances of survival would increase if other survivors could testify that I was also imprisoned here.

* * *

I didn't know which one the right key was, so I brought all the key rings I could find in the warden's office at the end of the prison cells. While I was trying every key, the girl kept on crying.

She was just crying. As if she lost all hope.

"Can you hear the sounds outside?"

" Yes…"

The shouts of the humans could be heard. I couldn't go into detail, but I somehow wanted to tell her that everything's going to be fine.

"We'll be fine."

Inevitably, this war had already been won by the humans. At my fearful yet confident words, the girl continued to weep and nodded her head. Finding the right key took a lot of time. I wondered if it was really necessary to open the door, but I wanted to get her out of that miserable place for now.

“It might be dangerous to go out, but… Let’s open it up for now. Even if you don’t want to go out of there”

“Ye, yes……”

The girl’s voice was shaking violently. Rather, it seemed that she lost control of her emotions after meeting another living human like her.

Still, I, as the older of us two, should put her mind at ease.

“Calm down… We’ll live. You’ll be able to live.”

That’s also what I wanted to say to myself.

You have to get out of this goddamn place and survive.

I had to. I mumbled “Let’s calm down, let’s calm down, we can live” to myself as if I was trying to hypnotise myself.

Just looking at her I could tell that she was seriously skinny. I couldn’t even begin to imagine how hungry she must be.

Ah.

Come to think of that.

“Wait, wait a minute.”

“H, huh? Huh?”

I ran somewhere instead of continuing to try to open the door with one of the keys. The child seemed to be calling me, but I ran like the wind and rummaged through the clothes I had taken off.

Then I came back with the stuff I pulled out from there.

“See. I found this in the place the keys were.”

I didn’t have to tell her the truth, so I told her a little lie and handed her a biscuit. It was a biscuit I had unnecessarily in my pocket. I just remembered that I threw it

away together with my clothes.

“You must be hungry, so eat this.”

The girl suddenly saw a palm-sized biscuit in her hand, which made her open her eyes wide. Yeah, things are sad and depressing, but you should also feel hellishly hungry. The girl was staring blankly at me who gave her the whole biscuit.

“Y, y…… You?”

“I’m fine. You eat first.”

I started fumbling with the keys again. The girl was silently staring, as if she was trying to decide if it was fine for her to eat it or not. Time passed, then

-Crunch!

Along with that sound, something got pushed against my mouth, while I was still preoccupied with finding the right key.

“Y, you, too…… You eat, too.”

The girl wept and offered me half of the biscuit. How much determination did it take her to cut it and give me half of it?

I felt emotional for some reason.

Are we like this just to atone for some kind of sin we committed? Didn’t I atone enough by dying after reading some malicious comments already?

My eyes turned cold, as I started to feel indignant for no apparent reason.

“Thank you.”

The girl started to cry again after she bit into the biscuit. I didn’t know whether she cried because it was delicious or because she was sad. What does food taste like after having endured such terrible hunger?

I didn’t know, but I thought I knew to some extent why she cried.

-Clack!

As soon as I took a bite out of the biscuit, the iron door opened.

* * *

The cage was open, but the girl didn't come out. Perhaps she didn't want to leave that body she was holding behind. I was about to carry it out as well, however, I knew that it wasn't such a good idea to go outside. It might still be dangerous.

It was for the best to wait here.

So rather than opening the prison cell to let someone out I did this bizarre thing of walking into it.

"Can…… the Demon King be killed……?"

"Of course."

I think he's already dead.

I wasn't fazed by the death of my unknown biological father. The girl quivered and murmured things while shedding tears, her head buried in her knees.

"Artorius said he'd come rescue us……"

Unfortunately, the Demon King probably dragged Artorius down with him. He wouldn't be able to save us, but the human side will most probably come here.

"Yeah. Someone's coming to save us."

This wasn't just a speculation, it was the truth. However, whether the army will come to save me or not was the most important thing. I mean, I wasn't the Demon King after all.

"I can't hear them anymore."

The girl trembled. The overflowing roars suddenly came to a halt. Thinking that the human army was defeated, the girl grew more and more afraid.

I reached out and hugged her by the shoulders.

“It’s okay. Everything’s going to be fine.”

“Is that so?”

The girl seemed surprised that I said that.

“You… You are so calm…”

These words seemed kind of eerie and made me stiffen a little

“Oh, no. I, I’m…… Also very scared.”

I think it was because I was next to a child, so I exaggerated a little, but it’s true that I was scared as all hell. You’d be fine, but I might get my head cut off soon.

Still, the girl didn’t seem suspicious of my calmness.

“What’s your… Name?”

The girl asked for my name.

My name was Valier Jr. here. Since the Demon King Valier was dead, my name must be Valier now. I couldn’t tell her that name. That would be like I was asking to get myself killed. To begin with, even a normal human would get stoned if they named themselves after the Demon King.

“That, see…… I don’t remember…”

In the end, I gave her the first excuse that came to my mind.

“Well…… I don’t know, I can’t remember anything. Who I am, why I’m here…… Everything.”

That was the most convenient excuse I could come up with.

Amnesia.

I decided on going with the setting of having lost my memory after these endless

days of merciless torture.

I can't believe the day would come when I had to use this dog-like concept.

"Sob…… What should we do……"

The girl hugged me as if she felt sorry for me.

I felt a little guilty because she believed it so quickly. The girl held me in her slender arms, but she gave me a bit of strength as well.

"I, if I could get out of here…… If I get out…… I'll definitely get your memories back…… I promise."

Hmm?

How though?

-Clack, clack

Before I could finish thinking, I heard someone running from a distance. It wasn't the only thing I could hear.

-This seems to be the prison!

-They're all dead!

Those were definitely human voices. People who I couldn't tell if they were knights or soldiers rushed to check the prison cells and finally met our eyes.

"Holy, survivors! We have survivors!"

The emotional exclamation from the one who found us rang through the prison.

Tears welled up in the girl's eyes, and my heart started racing like crazy in a weird mix of fear, excitement and relief.

Then a middle-aged knight followed the shouts and finally stepped before us. As soon as he saw the girl, his face horribly contorted.

“Oh, oooh…… Oh, woe, Her Majesty the Princess…”

No……

No, what?

CHAPTER 4

The girl I spoke with was none other than Charlotte de Gardias, the first princess of the Gardias Empire, the largest Empire on the continent.

Let's say this was like these common situations.

Let's say I was really a prisoner in the Demon King's Castle and I really suffered from amnesia.

I then proceeded to try to get a crying girl out of her cell without knowing what happened, comforted her and even got her something to eat because I pitied her for starving like that. However, she turned out to actually be the imperial princess who was captured by the demon king army!

Then let's say I was to be rescued together with the princess.

So let's just say that the princess was to tell them to treat me with their utmost respect.

The best expression that would fit this was "what a cliche".

However.

I was a demon who changed his appearance with low-level camouflage magic.

What, wasn't I kind of screwed if things developed like that?

I was led out of the Demon King's Castle like a cow being led to the slaughterhouse, and arrived at a place close to the barracks of the commander-in-chief of the Demon Conquest Army garrison far away from the battlefield.

Countless wizards and priests got close to the princess and immediately jumped into action. They also took some measures on me.

To my relief, I didn't have any undead attributes so the healing magic the priests cast on me didn't cause damage or something. It sure was fortunate that I didn't have a

constitution that rejected sacred power.

Of course, I already knew that that wouldn't be a problem. If it were, I wouldn't even have tried to get rescued by the human's side.

Not long after I became a dirty bastard, a lot of people clung to me to wash, wipe and clean me. It was a hot day, but the fear that I might die if I made a mistake made me overcome everything.

If a wizard cast a spell to, for example, dispel curses on me, everything would be over. Fortunately, a large number of troops were put into searching the Demon King's Castle, and it seemed difficult for them to just take care of the Princess as there were a lot of bleeding and injured people among the wizard forces.

However, the question was, was Charlotte naturally good-natured or did she somehow take a liking to me?

"Please look after this person. He's my benefactor after all."

In the end, the problem was that she cared too much about me.

Despite her own lack of energy, she was constantly instructing them to take care of me first. I bowed to the girl I put my arm around not too long ago.

"N, no. It's alright, Your Highness. I'm fine. I'm really healthy. Yes."

Actually, I didn't even do anything special.

"You said you lost your memory. You must have had a severe curse put on you."

"N, no, that's not it! I don't need to remember. Yeah, it's not such a big deal. Yes."

"That's…"

No, I know you're a nice girl, but won't you leave me some space?

You're giving me much too much for just one biscuit.

Eventually, I was allowed to lie in the private room next to the barracks after persuading the nursing staff who couldn't even catch a break taking care of me and

the princess. They were close to collapsing.

First of all.

I felt like I just escaped a collapsing cave only to jump into the mouth of a tiger.

[Event complete – Downfall]

[You have earned 100 achievement points.]

I somehow broke through the first hurdle…

* * *

The princess' consideration for me was persistent.

After some essential first aid was over, the princess summoned me back to the barracks.

There was a huge amount of food set on a table.

"You couldn't have eaten well. Go ahead and eat."

"Oh, yes… Yes."

However, I couldn't easily touch it. There were too many eyes looking at me right now. The princess stared at me and nodded as if she understood what was going on.

She seemed to think that I was someone that couldn't get even a single corn of rice down my throat if so many people were looking at me.

The princess looked at the surrounding guards, wizards and priests.

"Go out and wait."

"Bu, but Your Highness…"

"Didn't you say that the Demon King is dead and this place became safe?"

At the princess' gentle command, everyone left the barracks, leaving only me and the

princess behind. She looked at me quietly.

“Let’s eat quickly.”

“Yes, huh? Ah, yes. Yes.”

The princess grabbed the roasted turkey leg with her bare hands and began to bite into it.

“……”

It seemed like she kicked them out because she wanted to eat comfortably.

“E, erm…… Uh. Wo, won’t we get sick……?”

If one starved for such a long time and ate something like this, wouldn’t it cause problems in the stomach that may lead to one’s death?

Do you trust the priests outside so much?

“You, too. Quickly eat.”

There was no point telling her that.

* * *

The meal was quite large, so I had time to sort out my thoughts while the princess munched away.

In the Prologue, the Demon King Valier died, but there was a situation that happened before that.

An all-out war between the humans and the Demon Realm called the Demon World, the Demon World War.

Naturally, since there was a war going on, the hero destroyed the Demon King. Although they ended up destroying each other.

Although the reason behind the war wasn’t known, it was started under the Demons’ name. Demon King Valier had incredibly powerful forces and tried to make the

Human Coalition surrender.

Valier used his spies hidden in various parts of the Human Forces to kidnap key figures of the Coalition. He kidnapped politicians, kings, powerful warriors and wizards themselves or their families to prevent them from participating in the war.

And the most important hostage was the First Princess of the Gardias Empire and her mother.

Valier succeeded in kidnapping the Empress and the Princess. If the Emperor pulled out of the war, it was clear that the other forces would follow one after the other.

However, the Emperor knew that giving up on the Demon World War would be a great mistake. If the Empire pulled out, it would've been destroyed.

In the end, he had no choice but to give up on the hostages and launch an all-out war. All the hostages were killed, but after many twists and turns, the princess survived.

Was it something like that…?

No. I don't think so.

Let's think about it.

It's definitely a novel I wrote, but honestly, I couldn't remember each and every sentence. The prologue was relatively less memorable. I wrote that part the longest ago after all.

The princess, who ate in front of me with a cute face, wasn't the main character of my novel, which was a school drama.

To be honest, I didn't even know that her name was Charlotte de Gardias. It's not that I didn't remember it, I didn't know it in the first place. It wasn't like not remembering the name of someone passing by, but later when seeing the name of said person written down going "Oh, right there was someone like that.".

I couldn't remember the princess' name at all.

Let's think about this some more.

What I wrote had become reality.

As a result, all the parts that I hadn't imagined got filled in.

This was the world I knew and at the same time, it was a world filled with things I didn't recognize at all.

The soldiers guarding the door outside each had their own pasts, but I didn't know them. Even though this is the world I thought up, it was natural that things were like this. This was like virtual settings suddenly becoming reality after all.

Therefore, there would always be events in this world happening even though I hadn't described them and there should also be events that already happened. There were things in the past, present and future I had no clue about.

However, the sentences I wrote would definitely come true.

The Emperor gave up on the hostages and launched an all-out war. The subjugation of the Demon Realm was successful and if the Emperor pulled out of the war because of the hostages he would have received a lot of backlash by the other participants and the possibility of the Empire falling because of that wasn't small.

This was true.

And I never wrote anything about the first princess, which must be quite important for the main narrative. Of course, this was supposed to be just a normal slice-of-life school thing, however the imperial family's history got mentioned slightly as well.

However, the first princess was right in front of me and yet I have never written anything about this girl. Although this might be misguided inference, what if there was a character with the role of princess abducted by the Demon King? Wouldn't I've forced her into the narrative and made her more important?

An important character that was sure to appear on the main stage, to deviate from the main narrative isn't something that should occur.

Although the princess should occupy an important role later in the story, she doesn't even appear in the future.

She was the first princess who survived the Demon World War, you know?

However, why doesn't this character appear and why do I as the writer have no clue about her?

I had no choice but to regard my own novel as some kind of prophecy. I had to do this strange thing where I had to interpret my own writing.

The writer was usually ignorant of the vestiges of the story, however now I was experiencing said vestiges. They would now be and will be filled with things and I have no idea, with what.

I had to locate the blanks of the story that were filled as this world became reality and connect them to the future I knew.

I had to deduce how this bivalent narrative affected the future I knew. The princess was rescued like this right now, but she didn't appear in the future in the imperial family's story at all.

I had to figure out the answer using two facts.

There were two possible answers.

First.

My existence somehow made the princess who was supposed to die immediately live.

It didn't seem strange that the princess who was crying all alone could maybe take her own life. Also, she was extremely malnourished. However, could that just be solved with a single biscuit? Anyway, there was a possibility that my existence saved the princess. It was very low, but it was there.

Second.

This possible answer relied on the assumption that there may have been a huge event happening in my novel of which I wasn't aware of.

For instance, the big events I wrote would still flow as intended. There may be other reasons behind that.

So, let's say event A happened. I did write a description for it, but behind the scenes,

there might have been a completely different factor that caused event A to happen.

Let's say I wrote, it just happened out of nowhere. What should I do in that case? Let's say the reasoning was written irresponsibly like that.

However, it wouldn't be too absurd for there to be a backstory, a reason for this to happen the moment this world became reality. In other words, there might have been some kind of probability correction.

That was what happened when I tried to use the teleportation scroll a while ago.

So I'd know what incidents were going to happen in this world, but not why. This was a very strange situation. This all happened because I wrote this story so irresponsibly and rough without explaining things properly.

Was this my punishment for being imprecise?

So, unless I was the reason for the princess' survival, there was only one more answer.

She would be killed or would die soon.

"Why aren't you eating?"

The cute little princess asked me calmly.

* * *

Even in slice-of-life stories, villains were needed. There may be slice-of-life stories without villains, but these were in the realm of masterpieces. The presence of a villain simplified the narrative process. If one just wrote a bad guy did it, one can explain away a lot of things.

Why did he do that? If someone asked something like this, one could just explain it with "Because he's a bad guy lol".

So, I wasn't skilled enough to write a slice-of-life story without a villain.

[The Demon King is Dead]'s main villain was Imperial Prince Bertus de Gardias.

There were some minor villains, but the prince was a little different. If one would call the villains found at the Academy kind of sloppy and second-rated, the prince would be the real deal. He was the type to conspire to kill people. I gave him the setting that he'd do anything to become the next emperor.

From Bertus' perspective, the existence of the first princess who returned alive after getting abducted by the demons would only be a thorn in his side. Just because she had gone through such hardship, the princess would be in a position that garnered a lot of attention, and seeing as to how she was the First Princess their succession rights to the throne would be similar.

Bertus would be embarrassed to know that the first princess was alive and not dead. He would have, of course, thought that she died, but she came back alive.

If that were the case, then there was a good chance that Charlotte would soon be killed by Bertus or one of his people.

Charlotte would die behind the scenes at the vestiges of the main story. She wouldn't even be able to join the main story.

Charlotte would probably die soon. The possibility that she won't even make it to the Empire isn't that low either.

Charlotte would be in danger soon. I don't know how though. While I was thinking about that, the princess was letting out a sigh as she was finally full.

Would I be able to save this girl?

My life was like a fallen leaf in the wind, so was I even in any position to care about someone else's life?

Wouldn't it be better for me if Charlotte just died here and the wizards turned their gazes away from me?

Just when that thought went through my mind, a sense of horror ran down my spine.

I was an ordinary person. This wasn't an ordinary situation, but I was still just an ordinary person. Just the thought of planning to survive using such a young child's death already made me feel disgusted with myself.

Charlotte was the closest to an ally I had and she was in a situation in which she wouldn't know when her head might get cut off. Having Charlotte on my side would make her a great force to have though, no matter what unexpected situation might happen in the future.

Let's think like that.

The only time we were able to talk was now. After the meal was over, the guards would come back in again. Then we couldn't talk about any important things.

How the hell was I supposed to convey to her that her life was in danger? How was I supposed to explain why I knew that?

Charlotte wiped the grease from the corner of her mouth as she looked at me.

The look in Charlotte's eyes, which had been innocent and pure until now, seemed to have suddenly turned cold.

Just when I thought that the atmosphere around her suddenly changed, Charlotte talked in a low voice.

"Now, listen carefully."

Charlotte's demeanor was more serious than before.

"Our lives are in danger."

Charlotte brought up what I had wanted to say before me.

And she told me it's us who's in danger, not just her. I'm telling you, it's you.

CHAPTER 5

I had no other choice but to give an evasive answer to Charlotte's words, that relieved me somewhat.

"Hu,huh?"

The princess was already aware that her life was in danger.

Rather, the way she stared at me so calmly confirmed to me that my guesses were correct. she was looking at me with such serious eyes, as if she was never so preoccupied with the food.

"It's difficult for me to go into detail, but my half-brother, Bertus, was probably blindly waiting for me to die. For him, knowing that I was still alive, would be like a thorn in his side."

The girl that was sitting in a prison cell holding her mother's body and crying was completely gone. Charlotte, who returned to her seat, was calm, as if she realized again that she was a member of the imperial family.

However, Bertus actually had a lot of followers. He was a villain, but he sure wasn't incompetent.

"However, I don't know how he plans to kill me. I don't know who will do it, I just know it will happen soon."

She didn't know how she was going to be attacked and Charlotte didn't know who to trust in this chaotic situation just after the end of a war. Due to most forces searching the Demon King's Castle and cleaning up the stragglers, almost all the main forces were missing.

"And the people I turst aren't here. I think it was intentional."

When Charlotte was rescued, she realized that none of her own were around. Then something flashed through my mind like lightning.

“Hoh, so that’s why you told the people to leave…”

“Well, yes.”

In the first place, she kicked everyone out except me because she couldn’t be sure if any of them would end up being her killer except me.

Rather, Charlotte was a lot more cautious than I was.

She didn’t know who to trust, or when she’d be killed. How could one know if they hadn’t poisoned the food?

“Hey, the food might gotten poisoned…”

At my words, the princess laughed.

“If they poisoned the food, I’d just eat it and die then, in this situation.”

She was so hungry she didn’t care anymore.

I couldn’t imagine just how hungry the princess was, but it seemed like she was so starved that she’d rather die than not eat the food in front of her. She was so hungry that she’d even eat poisoned food. Fortunately, there wasn’t any poison in it.

“Most people stationed in these barracks will be enemies.”

“Is…… that so?”

Charlotte was convinced that not just a few but most of them were her enemies.

“I tried to leave the barracks a few times before, but they didn’t let me, with the excuse that I should relax. I’m sure they’re trying to lock me up.”

Charlotte’s voice was getting lower and lower.

“It’s not known yet that I was rescued. They didn’t want to announce this either.”

Is that so?

Even when she got rescued, she came out wrapped in something like a thick coat.

Charlotte was convinced that there weren't other survivors inside the Demon King's Castle.

"They're probably waiting for instructions on how to deal with me. That's why they don't want it to be known that I'm alive. After killing me, there's a high possibility that they'll just say I died in the Demon King's Castle."

They would make it out that she died in the Demon King's Castle, but would keep quiet about her getting rescued, so there they could say that they retrieved the corpse from inside the Demon King's Castle. Charlotte was looking at a number of possibilities.

From the outside it seemed like they cared for the First Princess, however, in reality, it was more like hundreds of people holding Charlotte in custody. Just the thought gave me goosebumps all over my body.

It didn't look like that at all. At least to me.

However, Charlotte already knew their intentions.

"So I, who was rescued with you, am also in danger."

Obviously, Charlotte said 'our' life is in danger and not 'my' life is in danger after all.

This wasn't just a matter of them finding out if I'm a demon or not anymore.

Bertus' followers would remove anyone who knew the first princess was alive, and I wasn't going to be an exception.

In the end, I was in a position in which I had no other choice but to try my hardest to keep Charlotte safe.

"Listen. We'll leave the barracks now."

She was in even greater danger after getting rescued, so she was planning to escape from this non-surveillance.

"Are we even able to run away?"

But with so many soldiers patrolling the grounds, was it even possible to escape

properly?

“Of course we can’t run away, but that’s not the point.”

Charlotte laughed.

“I want as many people as possible to know that I’m alive.”

Her purpose wasn’t to run away, but to inform the ordinary soldiers of her survival.

No.

But.

I was older.

So why did she seem so much smarter than me?

Charlotte rose from her seat, while I felt a strange sense of defeat.

The meal was over.

* * *

No one even imagined that Charlotte de Gardias could still be alive, so there wasn’t much surveillance in the barracks Charlotte and I were in. They were now waiting for instructions from above and didn’t seem to think that we’d be able to get away.

Even if I called it barracks, it was really just a tent.

Escaping from it was simple.

I slightly cut the tent in the back with a knife provided for the meal and checked their movements outside.

After cutting a hole in the tent, we crawled outside. We came out from the back and not its entrance so there were only a few troops walking around. It was quiet, which was understandable, as most of them were gathered in the Demon King’s Castle and not the garrison.

No one seemed to have expected that the princess would feel her life in danger and escaped as soon as she was rescued.

Yeah, that was normal. I was surprised by her behavior as well.

However, we couldn't walk around for long. They'd soon find out we were gone. Charlotte knew that as well.

"Okay, we'll be caught soon."

One might wonder why she came out when she knew that she'd be caught soon, however, Charlotte's purpose was to reveal her own survival to everyone so it didn't matter.

Just rumors about it alone would prolong Charlotte's life a little longer. Like this, the fact that she was still alive would spread among the ordinary soldiers, preventing her death from being made out as something that happened in the Demon King's Castle.

This could keep her alive for a bit until she found an alternative method.

That was Charlotte's purpose.

"You go ahead."

"Yes."

Charlotte's eyes lit up a little as she looked at me.

"You have to come back as soon as possible."

At that moment, I was able to catch a glimpse of Charlotte's fear of having to face death again.

Yes.

You must live, no matter what.

I left Charlotte behind and started running through the grounds.

-H, her, her Majesty the Princess?

-Her Majesty the Princess is alive!

Soon after, the cries of the remaining troops could be heard echoing through the camp.

Charlotte would be taken back to the HQ barracks, but that would leave me with greater freedom of movement.

'If they find out that you're gone, they'll naturally try to find you as well. Run as far as possible. They won't try to kill you right away, but they will definitely kill you.'

'Find Sir Francis and make sure to come back together with him.'

'I need you to find him and make him my escort.'

Just before we left the tent, Charlotte told me as such.

Sir Francis.

She said she didn't know who'd be her enemies and who'd be her allies.

However, she said that there was only one person who could never be her enemy.

The knight who rescued us, Francis.

If he had been Bertus' minion he would've killed us right on the spot, but saved us himself. That was why he couldn't be one of Bertus' servants.

From the moment she got rescued, Charlotte already had a hunch that she was about to face another crisis before she was even able to be happy about having gotten saved.

Originally, Charlotte would eventually get killed even though she was aware of the danger to her life. Charlotte couldn't do anything on her own to survive even with her wits. Which meant…

My success or failure determined Charlotte's life or death.

Charlotte couldn't find Francis on her own. Perhaps she gave orders to bring him to her, but those orders wouldn't have been carried out.

In the end, I had to find him myself and bring him to Charlotte's side.

The soldiers coming and going from the vast barracks only titled their heads when they saw me running around, but none came directly towards me. While Charlotte's face was well known, mine was not, hence, making this possible.

I approached one of the passing soldiers who looked like an officer and asked him.

"Do, do you know where Sir Francis is?"

He looked down at me and nodded.

"Well? What's going on?"

"I have an urgent message from the Commander-in-chief."

If I mentioned the princess here, it might take me some time to explain, so I had no choice but to cover this up with lies. He scanned my body and clothes from top to bottom. Fortunately, I changed into luxurious clothes, so I wasn't just dismissed.

If I had worn the rags, he would have told me to get lost.

"I don't know Sir Francis very well, but I'm pretty sure he's searching through the castle. I heard that most of the knights were sent there."

Damn it.

After rescuing us, it seemed like he had focused on his original mission, searching the castle, again.

No.

No, wait a second.

Bertus' minions would kill anyone who knew that Charlotte was alive.

It's clear that Francis' life would also be in jeopardy. He wasn't loyal to Bertus, so he

wouldn't keep his silence. Bertus, however, would want to eliminate anyone who knew of Charlotte's survival.

I wasn't the only one whose life depended on Charlotte's survival.

"We must go find Sir Francis! His life is in danger!"

"Wha, what?!"

I had no choice but to urgently shout to this unknown officer.

CHAPTER 6

Perhaps because of the credibility that came with these clothes I wore or my urgent look, the unknown officer immediately put me on a horse without saying anything.

Initially, this was a garrison, so it was far from the Demon King's Castle.

How did it come to this? I had worked so hard to get out of there not too long ago and now I was already rushing back to the castle.

I've never sat on a horse before, however the officer sitting behind me held my body tightly, so I was able to endure the shaking somehow.

"Can't you tell me the details? The castle has already been captured, so why is a knight's life in danger!?"

I didn't know if this person was one of Bertus' minions or not, but this guy was pretty young.

Did Bertus reach out his grubby fingers even down to the level of junior officers?

I thought about that for a little while, but this guy was helping me for now.

"I'll tell you when we find Sir Francis!"

"Understood!"

I didn't need to persuade him any more, as he was still helping me right now. Maybe because this was my first time riding on a horse, my hip felt like it was about to break, but this wasn't the time to care about something like that.

The Demon King's Castle was a mess as a result of this war and on the surrounding plains, demons who seemed to have been taken captive were being dragged along looking like dried corvinas.

Not all of them were dead. Some of the Demons surrendered and became prisoners.

I felt relieved that not all of them died, however, at the same time I felt guilty for betraying them in the end despite being their prince.

“What will happen to those Demons?”

Despite the urgency of the situation, I posed such a random question.

“If it were a war between humans, we’d take a ransom for them, but they’re demons.”

He talked as if I asked something strange.

“We’ve taken them prisoner for now, but what else would we do other than kill them?”

Negotiations were meaningless as their races were different. This was inevitable, because this was originally a war of annihilation. It was only natural that they were trying to destroy all seeds before they grow.

It made my heart heavy. Even though I was an ordinary man who just suddenly entered the body of the demon prince, I couldn’t easily shake off this dirty feeling.

The officer and I dashed past the endless procession of prisoners.

* * *

The wide, open walls were destroyed everywhere and filled with numerous bodies. It felt terrible just seeing the sight of demon and human corpses being lined up next to each other.

“It’s not something a kid should see.”

He showed my kindness by covering my eyes while he rode the horse as he considered me as a child.

I couldn’t tell just how many humans and demons had died. We passed through the destroyed gates. Numerous carriages were lined up before it.

They continued to load them with materials they found in the Demon King’s Castle.

The Demon Realm was destroyed in this Demon World War, and this long-standing

conflict was finally resolved by the humans…

But the most important was still the material aspect.

All countries that participated in the Demon World War would gain enormous wealth from selling the goods of the Demon Realm. So it was set up that a long golden age would start for the land of humans. It's said that they gained a long peaceful period in exchange for all the blood.

However, I would have never imagined I'd get to see this scene from the perspective of the demons. In the end, as if they were treating war as just a simple reason to plunder, numerous military forces swept up all of the Demon King's Castle's wealth.

Wagons filled to the brim with supplies continued to leave the area and empty wagons kept replacing them. The officer took me to the command post inside the castle where they conducted the transport and search operation.

The officer gave a salute to what appeared to be the commander.

"Lieutenant Dyrus, commander of the 3rd Platoon, 11th Company, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Imperial Corps!"

He shouted his official name with a stiff face. Lieutenant Dyrus. I somehow found out his name. He was in the cavalry, so that's why he could ride so well even with me being there.

The commander opposite of him didn't seem to have any idea who he was. That's to be expected. Going by his title he was probably way below the commander.

"What is it?"

The officer, who seemed to be a very high-ranking officer, frowned while he looked alternately between me and the junior officer. He seemed like he would severely reprimand him if he couldn't give a proper explanation why he brought someone who wasn't even a soldier to this place.

"I brought this boy here because he said he had to deliver an urgent message from the Commander-in-chief to Sir Francis. I presumed it to be confidential, so I didn't ask him what it was."

“Hm?”

Seeing my small lie growing bigger, I felt a chill run down my spine. However, he didn’t ask him why the commander had sent an urgent message through someone like me.

“Ah…”

His face slightly stiffened. He seemed to know something.

“Sir Francis… I just received a report that he was killed in an altercation with one of the demon remnants during the search of the Castle…”

Bertus was the first to use his hand. Not only my, but also Lieutenant Daryus’ expression hardened.

“Is the message something I should know about?”

“N, no! I was meant to deliver it to Sir Francis directly!”

“What a pity. Those damn demons should just curl up and die.”

The commander’s expression was grim, perhaps because he thought that he lost a great knight to the demons.

No, well, he was definitely killed by humans and not demons though.

“Sir, this is not a place for a boy such as him. Hurry back.”

“Yes!”

Fortunately, the commander didn’t interrogate me about the message or my identity. It seemed like he was too preoccupied with conducting this full-scale search of the castle.

After leaving the command post, Lieutenant Dyrus grabbed my shoulder.

“How did this happen? How did the Commander-in-chief know that Sir Francis was in danger?”

I said Sir Francis' life was in danger, and he actually died. I looked at the lieutenant in front of me. It was clear that he had very little authority here.

However, now that Sir Francis got already killed, I needed someone else to help me.

"It wasn't the Commander-in-chief."

"What?"

Hoping that it wasn't a mistake to bring this person in.

"Her Highness sent me."

I told him the truth.

* * *

I explained the whole story to him in a secluded area of the castle where soldiers didn't pass by. I started from the point where the princess was still imprisoned and got rescued.

"So Sir Francis was killed by someone from our army and not the demons?"

"Yes, maybe…"

"Shit. I can't even imagine how painful it must have been, but they were even trying to harm Her Highness the Princess as soon as she got rescued?"

He clenched his teeth, seeming shocked to hear that there were people who planned such things.

"Then you're trying to rescue the Princess, right?"

"Yes."

"Alright, I admire your courage."

He patted me on the shoulder as if he was proud of me, who tried to save the princess even though I was powerless. Then he seemed amazed by the fact that there were hidden battles going on on their side, just as they claimed victory.

“I can’t let that happen. I also want to become the Princess’ power.”

Even in this place with so many eyes, somehow an ally got killed by another. That would mean that Bertus’ minions were spread out throughout the whole Imperial Army.

“I have to get to her as soon as possible. I’m not as skilled as Sir Francis, but just having one more pair of eyes should be meaningful enough.”

“Yes, it is.”

Fortunately, Dyrus seemed to have a strong sense of justice and couldn’t let this slide. I didn’t tell him anything like he had to risk his life. He seemed to think that it was only natural to give up his life if that meant he could protect her.

Just when he was about to leave as fast as he could, I had a thought pass through my head.

“Lieutenant. Wait.”

“What is it? I have to go back quickly.”

I pointed at the lot of carts.

“There’s a way to protect the princess right now.”

Yes, I dared to return to the Demon King’s Castle.

“This is the Demon King’s Castle.”

“Right. What about it?”

“I saw that there was a storage room for magic items there when I got rescued.”

I’ve come this far, so I couldn’t just go back empty-handed.

“Why don’t we look for a teleport scroll there?”

Spaceshifting scrolls couldn’t be used here, but they’d obviously work in the garrison.

Using that spell, the princess could be taken out of this dangerous place right away. I hoped that the scroll vault hadn't been plundered yet.

If so, then the teleport scroll I was trying to use was obviously still there.

We couldn't attempt asking a wizard to teleport us. They'd surely trap us.

Dyrus seemed hesitant. He looked doubtful whether it was the right choice to go look for some teleport scroll that may or may not exist.

However, I knew the location of the teleport scroll. Once I confirmed that it had been stolen, we could leave immediately.

"Damn it, alright. It's clear that I wouldn't be much help even if I stuck to the princess…"

He nodded as if he acknowledged the limits of his abilities. I still wasn't clear on the layout of the Demon King's Castle, however I had remembered some things when I came out of the prison. There was no one to stop us, as many soldiers were going in and out of the Castle.

"It's this way."

Some people seemed puzzled about me walking around unarmed, but I couldn't explain this to each one of them.

Fortunately, I was able to trace my steps back to roughly where it was.

The Demon King's Castle was very spacious and the prison I was in and the magic item storage were located deep inside, so there was a very good chance that it hadn't been plundered yet.

"This is ridiculously huge!"

Eventually I got tired and ended up riding his back. I rummaged through my memory and pointed out the directions I remembered. Fortunately, we were able to reach it without getting lost.

"It's still fine!"

Fortunately, it was still in good condition. It looked like no one had come here yet.

"…It doesn't look that fine to me though. I think someone was here already, you know?"

Oh.

That was me.

"Ah, tha, that…… I, I meant that the scrolls were still looking fine!"

"Okay. Let's look for it."

I immediately picked up the teleport scroll that was spread out on the floor.

"I found it!"

"Already?"

"Yes, look."

The name of the magic contained in the scroll was written on it in common language, so he didn't ask me how I was able to find it right away. If it had been written in the Demon language, he would have suspected me for sure. I already knew two languages I had no previous knowledge of. It was like the staple cheats people get when they get sent to another world.

I resealed the scroll that hadn't been triggered yet. Of course, the teleportation would only work on one person. I didn't know if there were mass teleportation scrolls, but I had to find more scrolls.

Not only Charlotte, I had to get myself out of here as well and maybe Dyrus as well, as he'd also be in danger.

"I'll need a few more. We don't know what might happen. We should also get some scrolls that might help us as well."

"Little boy, take this."

"Thi, this is…?"

“A Scroll Book, is this the first time you’ve seen one? It was over there.”

He handed me an empty book.

“N, no, that’s not it. I know what this is.”

“Good then. Let’s use it.”

I knew what a scroll book was. It wasn’t even a magic item, just a book one could put scrolls into and organize it in a way that one could rip out the pages one needed whenever one wanted.

It was an object used by people who weren’t wizards, but still needed to use magic in battle. Since it was an item I came up with, there was no way I wouldn’t know about it. However, it felt really really strange actually holding this item I only imagined in my hands.

It was good that I didn’t have to crumble these scrolls into my pocket. I started filling the scroll book with useful magic spells, while Dyrus found another scroll book, filling it with magic as well.

“The Demon King’s Castle sure is amazing. I heard that even low-level scrolls were more expensive than my salary.”

He seemed to genuinely admire the vast stock of scrolls.

“I heard they’ve almost used up all the scrolls in this war, but if we’d take all the ones here it would be more than enough to make up for the lower level scrolls we’ve used.”

Dyrus rummaged through the scrolls while saying things like that.

There were no aoe attack spells, but we’ve swept up all the scrolls that might be helpful to us. I couldn’t take them with me earlier because I had to throw everything away, but now I could actually pack them up.

Useful Scrolls GET. Go, me.

Then I opened my eyes wide at a sudden discovery.

“Wait!”

“Wha, what?”

[Mass Teleportation]

Multi-person space movement order.

There was no more need to find more teleportation scrolls.

“Let’s go Lieutenant!”

“Yes. Let’s hurry.”

Then, as soon as we stepped out the door, we couldn’t help but stiffen.

“Huh?”

“Huh.”

Our eyes met with a soldier who was carrying some bundles.

No, if you think about it, wouldn’t we be seen as people who just arbitrarily took the spoils that should belong to the military? It was, of course, a felony to snatch loot without permission.

What if they won’t let us go?

Dyrus, I and the soldier were looking at each other in silence.

He clenched his teeth. Perhaps he was prepared for this extreme situation.

In the face of his new mission to protect the princess, he seemed prepared to do anything. Even if it meant having to subdue his own allies right on the spot.

“That. Lieutenant.”

The soldier cautiously opened his mouth after checking Dyrus rank.

“How about we’ll just turn a blind eye on each other?”

.....You too?

CHAPTER 7

I would've never imagined that my life would one day be intertwined with a child who wasn't even a major character of my novel.

But I also didn't expect to see soldiers looting in the Demon World War I described in it. There was no need or reason for me to imagine such things as I wrote the novel.

Normally, things like these weren't woven into the main story in novels such as this, right? This wasn't related to the main story at all, but this world was on a much larger scale than just the main story, right?

While the main character was waiting to enter the Gardias Temple letting his imagination flow, in the prologue section before the main story even started, a princess was about to be assassinated and the Demon Prince was fighting tooth and nail to save her. That was happening right now.

This world I described, with all it's blank spaces filled in, was more realistic than I imagined. That made this whole thing even more scary.

Dyrus didn't stop walking, while he did seem disappointed and angry at being treated the same as those mongrels who acted out of personal greed.

While I was rushing to get out of the Demon King's Castle, Dyrus suddenly grabbed my arm.

"!"

Dyrus suddenly slipped into the hallway next to him, not the way we were going to go, and hid me behind a Gargoyle statue in the hallway. Dyrus' expression was serious.

"The Knights of Duke Salerian."

I knew what he meant, so I immediately held my breath.

Duke Salerian.

Bertus' maternal family and the reason he could have so many followers. If Charlotte had judged Sir Francis to not necessarily be an enemy, Duke Salerian would absolutely be the princess' enemy. The overarching goal of Duke Salerian was to make Bertus emperor.

It was very likely that Sir Francis was killed by them.

Dyrus held his breath and tensed up. I didn't know what kind of status Dyrus had, but he said he was a Lieutenant.

In addition, the Knights of Duke Salerian, one of the most powerful noble families in the Empire, would have prestige not comparable to any other noble. Although I'm not really sure, they must be high-ranking knights far more superior compared to normal knights.

Not to mention their skills.

-Clang, clang, clang

There were a large number of them.

– Are you sure they entered the Castle and haven't come out?

-Yes, I am.

– Can't say if that's a good or bad thing…

– What should we do if we find him?

-Do I have to tell you?

– Are we going to do that officer in, too?

– It must have been his fate to end in such an unlucky way.

They didn't mention a concrete person in their conversation, but it was clear who they were looking for.

They were looking for me and Dyrus. Dyrus was holding his breath while clenching his teeth.

They have to pass by. They can't notice us.

Then.

I realized how foolish it was to think that we could fool the senses of high-ranking knights.

"I think they're over there."

One of the knights said calmly, as if they were in no rush to find us.

"They're breathing pretty harshly. Looks like they're nervous. Hey, it's hard not to notice that."

A series of nearby knights arrived there after hearing the call.

There were four knights in total. Dyrus and I stepped out from behind the statue and slowly backed away.

Four knights in splendid plate armor came into view and were looking at Dyrus.

The knight, wearing a relaxed expression, clicked his tongue slightly. Then the one who seemed the most senior opened his mouth.

"The princess really is a pitiful girl."

"……"

"I'm not the only one, but he keeps making me kill the hardliners "

The knight sighed that he'd have to kill 1 to 10 people. I didn't even feel like contradicting him.

"Shame on you. For the Knights of the Empire, laying hands on the imperial family!"

Dyrus shouted.

"If you thought the whining of some kid I don't even know the name of would put even a small scratch on my honor…… I'm sorry to say this, but I don't really care."

He didn't seem to care at all about the accusations he heard from people who weren't worth his time.

"Yeah, it's not a pleasant thing. I admit that."

He smiled bitterly to himself.

"I can't believe that I have to end the day drenched in the blood of demons by spilling human blood."

It seemed quite unpleasant for him to have to do such a thing. Just because the princess didn't die, he had to do something like this.

Apart from that displeasure, however, there was no hesitation in his actions.

-Sching!

When that knight drew his sword, all the other knights did the same. We could run back, but we'd surely get caught sooner or later. Their physical abilities should completely transcend not only mine, but even Dyrus'.

A Scroll.

Could we break through this situation with any of them?

However, while I was leafing through the scroll book to choose a magic spell, they would just run up to me and slice my head off before I could even take a single breath.

I was finally able to escape the Demon King's Castle, but did I just come back here to die like this?

The thought of dying just like a dog in such an absurd situation made me feel feverish.

I had to die again less than a day after I first died. The knights began to slowly approach us, as my breath tightened. Despite being in a huge corridor, the three knights' presence was enough to fill it.

Of course, that was just a figure of speech, they weren't really filling the corridor, it

just felt that way. The presence of those approaching knights' couldn't even be compared to that gigantic gargoyle statue Dyrus and I had been hiding behind just a moment ago…

Wait a moment.

Gargoyle?

I stared blankly at the gargoyle statue.

That.

Don't these things usually move in places like this?

Though that was a terrifying thought.

-Whoosh!

-Boom!

The Gargoyle's giant halberd hit the knights approaching us from the front.

Explosions.

Astonishment.

Death.

"Run!"

And judgment.

Now was not the time to think.

* * *

The huge Gargoyle's merciless surprise completely crushed the knights who were approaching us with raging force. I clearly saw those high-ranking knights were literally shredded to bits even with their armor on. They didn't even get the chance to scream.

They may be strong but this was the Demon King's Castle.

It was the place that held the strongest forces of the Demon World.

It wasn't hard to understand that the gargoyle was a powerful monster compared to high-ranking knights who were monsters among humans.

I couldn't even feel nauseous. I avoided the bodies before I could even think about it.

-Thud! Boom! Thud!

We were able to escape while the knights pursuing us were responding to the suddenly activated gargoyle.

"W, why is it suddenly moving?"

"I, I have no idea!"

No, I did know.

Obviously, all my physical abilities were close to 0, but I did have the ability to dominate demons. Perhaps my thoughts activated the gargoyle, or it sensed the knights' killing intent and acted on its own.

Anyway, it clearly moved to protect me.

I was born with the power to control demons.

However, I couldn't tell him that, so running away was our top priority. No matter how many knights there were, they wouldn't have the ability to withstand the attacks of such a colossal monster.

The castle, which was in the middle of getting searched, was thrown into chaos by the sudden explosions. Dyrus and I used that chance to quickly escape the Demon King's Castle.

"There'll definitely be others following us."

"Yes."

The Knights of Duke Salerian were scattered and searched for us. Although there was a skirmish happening, they'd definitely pursue us if they knew we escaped. Dyrus put me on his horse and we rode straight out of the castle.

We earned some curious glances as we rushed out, but this wasn't the time to be concerned about that.

-Doo, doo, doo, doo!

As soon as we arrived at the garrison, we had to teleport the hell out of here with Charlotte. I almost lost my mind while riding on that horse. It was hard just holding on to it.

"Shit! They've already caught up to us!"

Their command system was in such perfect order, that the Knights of Duke Salerian caught up to us in no time. Despite there being so many eyes around, they wanted to catch us, even while risking there being rumors.

That must have meant that even if they killed me and Dyrus right here, they'd be able to take care of the aftermath themselves.

It was impossible for them to kill the princess on the main road, but if it was just us they could do so easily. They'd just make up some reason for that later.

"Damn it!"

The horses the knights were riding on were far superior to Dyrus' steed. Even though they rode them while wearing armor they were still that fast.

Despite being so far away from us at first, they were getting closer to us.

The rapidly increasing number of pursuers was now over 10. The soldiers driving the loot wagons and the ones taking away the prisoners of war stared at this sudden chase blankly.

"Lieutenant! Hold my waist tightly and secure me!"

"Yes!"

Dyrus grabbed my waist and kept me from falling without asking what I was planning on doing. I opened the scroll book hanging from my waist, then I quickly looked for any magic spell that might help us in our current situation.

Anything.

Isn't there anything that we can use?

[Haste]

I opened the scroll and cast Haste on the horse.

– Doo, doo, doo, doo!

In an instant, the horse's movements became faster. White foam began to form around the horse's mouth.

"Damn it! It's good that it got faster, but this might kill the horse before we even arrive!"

Haste made one's movements faster, but it also made the target drain it's stamina rapidly. A horse wasn't an animal that could sprint for a long time in the first place. In addition to that, I applied acceleration magic, which insanely amplified its metabolism. This was like burning away the horse's life.

It was going to be like that soon anyway.

"I'd rather die after three minutes instead of one!"

"What a nut job!"

Even in this situation, he had time to burst out into laughter as he was just that speechless. Dyrus rode like crazy. Despite it being a lot more difficult riding this faster horse, he kept on holding onto me and controlling his horse with one hand.

"Shit…!"

Dyrus looked behind and cussed.

"They're going to shoot arrows!"

The knights weren't even using swords. They were just firing arrows at us because they couldn't catch up to us. Fortunately, Dyrus was able to dodge the arrows in an almost acrobatic way, which deflected the arrows.

"The horse seems to get more and more exhausted!"

The condition of their horses and our horse was so different. I mean, as I was in a hurry back then, Dyrus made his horse sprint to the Demon King's Castle a while ago as well.

He made this already exhausted horse sprint and on top of that I cast Haste on it, so it was natural that it's stamina soon reached its end.

I looked through the scroll book to see if there were any spells that could replenish the horse's stamina, but there wasn't any magic spell like that. There were only auxiliary type magic spells like Illusion, Fascination and Delusion inside.

"Do you think they'd be affected by Fascination spells?!"

"They won't! Knights are required to undergo anti-magic training!"

They were all equipped with anti-magic measures. Low-level auxiliary magic won't work on them, is what Dyrus told me flat out. Yeah, I kind of expected that it wouldn't work. It would be a bit ridiculous for melee experts to just die after getting peppered with magic, so they set up some training sessions on how to counter magic.

I knew that, because I put the subject "Anti-magic Training" into the academy's curriculum. Anyway, my set-up was pulling my legs right now.

Nevertheless, I had to use a scroll.

It was a risky gamble.

I used Illusion.

"I told you it won't work!"

"I'm not aiming for the knights!"

I opened the scroll to use its magic spell.

The targets weren't the knights.

If you would shoot a general, shoot his horse first.

I intended to carry out that old idiom.

[Illusion]

The spell activated.

-Neeeeeeigh!

-Clatter!

Then, the sounds of Knights falling to the ground and horses neighing could be heard from behind us.

Fortunately, it didn't seem like the horses were trained to resist magic.

If magic didn't work on the knights, I'd just cast the spell on their horses. I just showed the horses an illusion of a dragon.

CHAPTER 8

“You…! Great!”

I pulled out the Fascination scroll this time.

The type of the spell didn’t even matter. Anyway, any spell that could affect their horses would do. There was no other reason why I was taking on this risky gamble.

Just as I was casting spells on their horses, they might cast some on our horse.

However, Dyrus said clearly that the Coalition used up almost all their scrolls in this war.

And none of them were magicians.

I thought that even if they had a scroll book, they wouldn’t have any more spells in them and it turned out to be the truth. The war was over and they couldn’t get replacements for the scrolls they used and they obviously didn’t have any more in stock.

Most of them probably had attack spells in their scroll books that would have an intuitive immediate effect and they probably used up all of them. I started this gamble believing that.

– Neeeeeeigh!

-Bang!

My guess was right.

The horses toppled over after being affected by the low-level magic, causing the knights riding on them to come rolling down to the ground. Those that didn’t manage to land properly were highly likely to die by breaking their necks.

Some may have died.

I didn't actively think about the fact that I might have killed them, as they were trying to kill me.

Guilt, remorse or justifications for my actions didn't even occur to me at that point.

I had to do everything I could. I had no other thoughts but that. The situation was so urgent that all my judgement seemed to have focused on only this single point.

All concerns regarding ethics and values were put off until later. Not consciously, but unconsciously.

"Shit!"

However, I didn't have any more mental magic I could use to knock them all down

There were two pursuers still chasing after us with rage filling their eyes.

The horse we rode was already far over its limits. It was now slower than it was before I placed Haste on it.

"They'll catch up to us."

Dyrus shouted in a desperate voice. The horse was exhausted and there were two knights, who witnessed their comrades fall down, still chasing after us from afar with killing intent so sharp pointed at us that it really felt like I was getting cut.

The horse now started to just trudge, while the knights' horses followed us at a frightening speed. Dyrus clenched his teeth and pulled out his sword, however it didn't seem like he thought he could win.

Was this the end?

And then, I saw a long line of wagons and soldiers watching this chase.

And.

There was also the procession of those demon prisoners that seemed to go on forever.

And I saw the eyes of those demons looking at me.

"……"

From Goblins to Trolls and unarmed Ogres, Orcs and countless other unknown types of demons.

All these demons were watching this commotion.

They were looking at me.

Not even a single word was exchanged between us.

I didn't say anything to them.

They just looked at me without saying a word.

They were demons of the Demon Realm who surrendered after losing their fighting spirit, knowing that their king died.

As demons and monsters, they had to pay the price of defeat with their lives. Since no one would pay their ransom, the only thing they could pay with was their lives.

They were looking at me.

Because the Demon King was dead.

And I was sure to be the last one.

Seeing how I was betraying them.

I didn't know how they were able to recognize me, but I felt like they knew who I was or were they able to read my feelings just by looking at me in this desperate situation?

Or did the power sleeping inside of me 'Demon domination' activate because of this situation?

The process and outcome were unknown to me.

However, after giving up everything, they looked at me with eyes that seemed to have found their last hope.

-Crank!

An ogre broke his shackles that bound him and began charging at the knights rushing towards me.

-Kuooooooooooooh!

With a roar that seemed to shake the heavens and earth, the demons, who were tied up and quietly let themselves get dragged away before, immediately began to resist.

“Cr, cra, crazy!”

In the end, the two knights who were following us were attacked by the ogre rushing at them.

Once again everything got chaotic as the prisoners of war began to riot.

This was the last resistance of the remaining demons in order to save their last king.

* * *

They didn’t use ropes to tie the demons. It was impossible for others to break them except if they were large monsters like an ogre. Most of the demons were just struggling to make a commotion.

Therefore, the prisoners began to be subdued and that suppression ultimately just turned out to be bloody slaughter. The only thing that changed was that they got killed here by the troops and not on the execution grounds.

Because of the disturbance caused by the demons and the suppression of the last pursuers no one was chasing after us anymore.

Dyrus seemed to find this absurd situation hard to accept.

“What the hell is this…”

The gargoyle activated to kill some knights just at the right time and just when we were in a desperate situation the demons decided to riot and attack the knights.

Dyrus knew that this was abnormal. He just couldn’t figure out what was going on

exactly. However their main goal of escaping with Charlotte was yet unfulfilled.

Dyrus seemed to hold back his doubts. He remained silent until we drew near to the garrison.

The atmosphere at the garrison was definitely exhilarating.

-Is Her Royal Highness really still alive?

-Yeah, she just came out and shook hands with the soldiers telling them that she was alright.

-She just went back to the barracks to get some rest…

– What a relief, what a relief.

– That dog-like Demon King died and the princess was still alive. How blessed can we be?

-Hey man, the Empress died though, so to call it a blessing is……

-That's true, I hope that Her Highness will soon get back on her feet…

As Charlotte expected, the news that the princess was still alive had already spread throughout the garrison. It seemed like they hadn't gotten the report about the rioting prisoners of war yet.

There were more eyes and ears here.

But it was too early to feel reassured. The Knights of Duke Salerian tried to kill Dyrus and me, despite the presence of all those wagons and convoys. It was just the princess who was difficult to touch.

Even if news arrived that Dyrus and I killed their knights, there would be nothing about them trying to kill us, so no one would care.

They would have so many reasons ready why they had to immediately execute us.

Soon, news of what happened close to the Demon King's Castle would reach this place. Before that happened, we had to get out of here.

Fortunately, the soldiers' eyes were fixed on the HQ barracks where the princess was said to rest.

They seemed to wonder if they'd ever be able to see the princess' face, who was said to be still alive. However, because of that, the barracks were completely encircled. We had no way to sneak in.

There was no way around it.

Dyrus and I strode straight towards the barracks.

The guard looked at me and shook his head before I could even say anything.

"Her Highness is resting. Go back."

"I've brought the goods Her Royal Highness asked for."

It seemed like nothing would make this guardsman budge.

"There was an order from the Commander-in-chief that she needed absolute rest. Come back later."

The moment we'll try to go back, you'd just try to kill us secretly.

Even if that didn't happen, it would be over as soon as the news from the Demon King's Castle arrived here.

We had to get in there somehow.

"It's urgent."

At those words, the guard's expression hardened.

"Even if you were rescued together with the Imperial Princess, we can't let someone with an unclear identity like you be by her side. Don't tell me you're having some ideas?"

You guys are more dangerous to her, though?

That guard would certainly rather die than let me in. He was staring at me and

pointing the end of his spear at me as if telling me that he'd be forced to use violence if we tried to force our way in.

I had no idea what Charlotte's condition was inside, but it seemed like she wasn't able to come out to me, even if she knew that we arrived.

They wouldn't know what I was trying to do.

However, knowing that I had received some instructions from the princess, they tried to prevent me from meeting her subtly.

The problem was that I neither had the strength nor justification to break through their vague actions.

"Boy."

At that moment, Dyrus called out to me.

"Lieutenant."

He took a deep breath, sighing as if he had no other choice.

"It's plan B."

-Sigh!

"Kuek!"

As if it was a sign, he drew his sword and stuck it right in the neck of the guard, before his opponent could do anything.

"You crazy!"

The other guards just spat out swear words, completely in shock that their comrade was suddenly stabbed like this.

"Go!"

While Dyrus cut one attacking guard after the other, I just stopped thinking and ran into the barracks.

As I broke through several layers of tents, I could see Charlotte, who quietly sat in her seat inside and countless other people standing around her, not touching her, but they seemed to monitor her.

"!"

Charlotte looked at me, opening her eyes so wide her eyelids seemed to be about to rip apart.

An old man wearing a white priest's robe shouted in a brusque tone.

"I believe I made it clear that you were not to let anyone in……!"

There was no time for conversations.

[Flash]

"Kuerk!"

"What's going on?!"

"He's using magic!"

– Flash!

In an instant a flash of light exploded inside the tent. While everyone was blinded by the light, I unblocked my eyes and grabbed Charlotte's hand, who was also affected by the sudden flash.

Charlotte was equally perplexed as the others. Charlotte told me to get Sir Francis and not to break in here and shoot out a flare.

[Mass teleport]

[Please specify destination.]

I cast mass teleportation.

"To Gardium!"

Our destination was the Imperial Capital.

We're going to Imperial Capital Gardium!

[You have passed the Prologue sequence.]

[Special Achievement – Inflection Point of History]

[A key figure (Charlotte de Gardias) who should not have appeared in the original story line has survived.]

[The future has changed dramatically.]

[Acquired 1000 Achievement Points.]

I was finally done with that hellish prologue.

CHAPTER 9

This was called teleportation.

It was really unbelievable, experiencing this first-hand.

As the flash of light subsided, the scenery was completely different. Unlike the Demon Realm, which was covered by a gray sky, a blue sky and a bustling city spread out before my eyes.

The very place where the main story of my novel [The Demon King is Dead] unfolded.

The Imperial Capital Gardium.

It gave me a strange feeling seeing the place I had only described with words before… Like shit.

Where are we?

I don't know this place.

No, well, to be fair, I didn't describe every single corner of the Capital. I mean, if I did I would have been cussed out for making the chapters longer by adding useless descriptions.

Perhaps we were in a plaza somewhere in the in the capital. People were looking at me and the princess who suddenly appeared out of nowhere through teleportation with puzzled expressions. Teleportation was a super high-level spell, so it was definitely not commonly seen.

So, in the end, I arrived in the Capital Gardium, a city I wrote about, but had no clue about.

"Haah… Wha, what happened? Thi, this is… The Capital?"

And next to me, Princess Charlotte de Gardias, who had teleported with me, held a

puzzled expression on her face as well.

I was supposed to bring her an escort, but I ended up kidnapping her using teleportation magic, so it was natural that she was surprised.

“Sir Francis has already been killed. So I went back into the Demon King’s Castle to find some teleportation scrolls. I thought that the Imperial Capital would be the safest place for the princess.”

After hearing my explanation, the princess widened her eyes. She was shocked to hear that Sir Francis had already been killed and seemed surprised that I was able to come up with an alternative method so quickly and saved her from a situation like that.

Yeah, it’s not like a normal 17-year-old would have that wit.

But even considering my original age, this was hard to come by!

I almost died again a few times

Later.

“Yes, well done… You did a really, really good job.”

Charlotte plopped down on a nearby bench, apparently because she felt relieved.

She had almost breathed her last.

It was pretty scary thinking like that.

– Flash!

Dyrus arrived in front of me with a flash of light.

“Gasp… Gasp…”

Dyrus, who seemed to have been escaping from a rather desperate situation, arrived in front of us while breathing heavily.

“You’re safe, Lieutenant!”

“Yeah… A little later and they would have blown away an arm or a leg.”

Dyrus took a deep breath and fell straight to his knees. Not before me, but before Charlotte.

“Lieutenant Dyrus, commander of the 3rd Platoon, 11th Company, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Imperial Corps. I give my sincerest greetings, Your Imperial Highness the First Princess.”

Charlotte didn’t seem to understand what was going on.

* * *

We had two teleportation scrolls.

Plan A was rather simple. Just approach the princess and use the Mass Teleport Scroll if the guards let us through the entrance.

Plan B was for Dyrus to open up a path for me and take the aggro off of me. Dyrus would escape with a single person Teleport Scroll, while I brought away the princess using the Mass Teleportation Scroll.

Dyrus had confirmed that we got away and escaped himself.

Of course, Charlotte was astonished seeing a stranger appear out of the blue, so I explained the whole story first. I explained that if it weren’t for Lieutenant Dyrus, I wouldn’t have been able to perform my mission properly.

Charlotte nodded her head, still wearing a puzzled expression.

“Thank you. Lieutenant Dyrus.”

Charlotte expressed her gratitude, saying that he greatly helped her.

“As a soldier of the Imperial Family, I shall always put the safety of the Imperial Family first.”

Dyrus had made a difficult decision. No matter how much a soldier should say these words, putting them actually into practice was a completely different matter. He risked his life throwing himself into the forces who were trying to kill the princess as

if it was natural. He had no hesitation or thoughts that he might die.

I just did what I did because my life was intertwined with hers, but this dude was the real deal.

Charlotte nodded as if she thought so as well.

“Wouldn’t our enemies be able to come after us using teleportation magic?”

That was our most pressing concern now. There definitely were wizards among our enemies, and I pretty much shouted out that we were teleporting to Gardium. They obviously knew where we were.

Dyrus’ expression hardened at my words.

“We must move quickly.”

“No, we don’t have to.”

Charlotte, however, was calm.

“There should be no wizards among the Coalition Forces who could successfully teleport from the Demon Realm to Gardium. We have moved an unbelievably far distance. This was originally impossible. Obviously, there were no Warp Gates near the Demon King’s Castle either, so no one would be able to pursue us.”

Informing us that the Demon’s Scrolls had unbelievably great performances, Charlotte denied the possibility of pursuers coming after us using teleportation.

“However, They can report this matter using communication magic. Well, it will take a while, so that should be enough for us to reach the Imperial Palace.”

Communication magic wasn’t instantaneous. There would be delays. To be exact, the distance between these two locations was so great that there would be just as great a delay until the magic spell reached the right person.

First he heard that the princess was alive, so he gave orders to kill her, this time it had to be reported that the princess had already teleported to Gardium.

“Could you explain what happened, Lieutenant Dyrus?”

“Yes, I shall explain.”

So we didn’t have that much time to spare, but we still took the time to explain what happened to the princess as we walked down the streets of the Capital. When we reached the part about me nearly dying to the Knights of the Duke, the princess seemed sorry while looking at me. I did this to survive, so she didn’t have to feel sorry for me.

Of course, I could have used the teleport scroll as soon as I left the Demon King’s Castle if I just wanted to live, but that’s not how I wanted it to be.

I don’t know why, but I couldn’t just leave Charlotte behind even when my life was at stake. I knew one didn’t need a reason to save someone, but this was the first time I risked my life for another. I could only say that it was something wholly unfamiliar to me.

Anyway, all’s well that ends well. But I’m pretty goddamn sure that I wouldn’t be able to pull something like this off more than once.

Anywho, while Dyrus was recounting the incident, I felt a chill running down my spine…

Looking back at the story, there were just too many unnatural parts.

A Gargoyle suddenly activated and blocked the knights.

The demons suddenly rioted and for some reason the captured demons acted as if they were trying to protect us.

The first one could be chalked up as a coincidence, but the second situation was just too suspicious. It was just too convenient.

Dyrus just seemed to feel lucky to be alive, but I was watching the princess’ expression harden.

She was Charlotte, who had lived in the Imperial Castle, that could be said to be the main stage for political battles. She’s been through some things, but she was extraordinarily smart. As soon as she was released from a situation where she was pushed to her limits both physically and mentally, she immediately foresaw her own death.

Those strange incidents.

A boy who lost his memory.

A teleport scroll I found as if I knew exactly where it was.

There were ample of reasons to be suspicious of me. I didn't know what conclusion they'd draw from this, but as far as I could see it wouldn't be a good one for me.

It was clear what conclusion the princess would reach. I didn't know what choice she'd make, but I couldn't wait for her to decide on one.

I slowed down a bit and walked behind them. Fortunately, Dyrus was close to the princess and was prepared for any unexpected events.

That's good.

It would be good if the princess owed me, but I wouldn't be able to stay close to her as I'd risk my identity being discovered someday.

It was a relationship that couldn't have lasted long anyway.

This was the only time I could pull out.

I walked slowly and silently, then I quickly entered an alleyway I passed by.

Even if she was willing to give me a thousand gold, I could no longer be associated with the princess.

The princess would be safe, but I, on the other hand, had entered another tiger's den.

It was impossible for me to go to a place full of powerful and aristocratic people with my camouflage magic, that could get dissolved just by using weak dispel magic.

How come I've only ever been able to make short-term goals ever since I entered this world?

And why did I alway have to risk my life to reach these short-term goals?

Passing the alleyway, I hid so that the princess and Dyrus couldn't find me.

They wouldn't be looking for me now. Going back to the Imperial Palace held priority.

I first left that collapsing cave called the Demon King's Castle only to end up in the tiger's den, the garrison of the Coalition Forces, but that was just a stepping stone to enter the dragon's lair called the Imperial Palace.

After walking around for a while, I finally stopped at a quiet spot and sat down on a bench.

"Phew…"

Leaving everything aside, I had to take a rest.

"Fuck…"

Using some common saying, my mind was exploding.

It seemed that I had faced so many bloody trials, witnessed so many people getting slaughtered and I even caused some people's death with my own hands.

While coming this far, my mind had already crossed its limits several times.

Let's rest for now. Let's take a break and sort out all these horrible memories somehow.

And think about what to do next.

* * *

This was the first time I could take a break after having met so many desperate situations and being driven into a corner so many times in this unfamiliar world. I felt a subtle sense of relief that I wasn't forced to go anywhere.

I was currently somewhere in the Imperial Capital.

As I saw it, the Imperial Capital was somewhat similar to Seoul in Korea. It went without saying that it was an incredibly large city, the largest on the entire continent. In this day and age, a city of that size wasn't all that common.

I was now sitting on a bench on a promenade of some sort, it wasn't too deserted or

too crowded. The Imperial Capital was already a bustling and flourishing city, but the Empire will prosper even more with the victory of the Demon World War.

In any case, if I want to survive, I can't force myself to think about certain things.

While trying to put my splintered heart back together, I somehow had to suppress these terrible memories and rationalize my guilt.

From this point on I had to think about what I had to and was able to do.

I had a few problems.

I didn't have any money.

I had no place to live or food to eat. It was even more nonsensical to go back to the princess for that.

Working and somehow making money would also be rather difficult. What if my camouflage magic suddenly wore off while I was washing dishes in some restaurant? They also wouldn't give me any advanced payment and I had an unclear identity.

I was now slowly realizing in real time why vagrants fell into crime.

Except through criminal ways, I had no other way to make ends meet. Couldn't I somehow get into some sort of public childcare facility or something? Did places like this even exist here? No matter how crazy one was about creating settings, who'd be so crazy as to set up a public childcare system in their novel……?

Oh.

Now that I think of it.

I indeed did such a crazy thing.

A project to manage the large numbers of orphans caused by the casualties of the Demon World War would be carried out as a post-war measure.

I knew this because there were some children from said public childcare facilities in Temple, the main stage of my school drama. I wrote that there were quite a few children of people who were killed in the Demon World War in Temple, among them

were also major characters.

However, the news of the victory against the demons had just been delivered. Such a large-scale policy wouldn't have been implemented so quickly.

That was highly unlikely.

I could try to go to some place similar to an orphanage and ask them to take me in, but regardless of whether they accepted me or not, this was still the Imperial Capital.

Even if she didn't do so right now, there was a high possibility that the princess would try to find me.

Whether she wanted to reward me or take action to find out who I was, it was very likely that the princess would try to find me for some kind of reason.

And she should be able to infer that I'd eventually go to some public childcare facility. She was smart after all.

So, if I went to an orphanage, I'd be able to survive for some days, but I'd alway feel anxious about the princess coming to find me one day.

She might not be able to find me if I went to a different city, but I didn't have the money to travel around. I didn't have much confidence about surviving in the wilderness either.

And although I was a demon, seeing as I was carrying around biscuits, I was sure that I had to eat.

Actually, I was hungry right now. I should have put in some convenient setting like "Demons could survive solely through mana' or something!

[Used the function 'Add Settings'.]

"……Huh?"

[A total of 100000 achievement points are required to add the setting 'Race Arcdemon can supplement nutrition by consuming magical power'.]

A message suddenly appeared in front of my eyes.

...What's with this?

CHAPTER 10

Then it occured to me that I should probably think more about these occasional message windows appearing in front of me. I never mentioned those in my novel.

I wasn't all that sure about this subject, but what I had to think about the most right now were probably these achievement points.

So, the way I understood it was, that the novel I wrote now suddenly had a game system implanted in it, making it some strange chimera…

Who the hell would read this shit? Even though I prayed so much on every holiday for some kind of cheat, this just wasn't right.

Anyway, I might have been given some type of cheat skill. Even if this turned into some dog-shit novel, if I could live a comfortable life I'd prefer that over anything else.

I kind of understood now why the 'isekai' genre got so popular. I'd have been living comfortably if I had just written more novels of that genre.

No, I wouldn't have necessarily been reincarnated as the main character, so I might have ended up in an even more unfortunate situation. Maybe as just a normal high schooler or something. Moreover, I would have to watch some nerdy high school kid, who was also heir to his family's secret art of swordsmanship, holding a japanese sword, talking up a big game, wouldn't I? Aah, if I had to follow that kind of brain dead main character I might die of high blood pressure again.

Anyway.

I really hope I can become some godsend cheater in this dog-shit I wrote.

Hoping that I was the owner of such a cheat, I tried to look through the system. Just by thinking about it, a message appeared before my eyes.

[Congratulations, you have been granted the power to interfere with the world of 'The Demon King is Dead', your undisputed masterpiece, which was rated as 'Neither

this nor that and a typographical crime' by the office of Atonement, Judgement and Evaluation]

Why are you insulting me all of a sudden?

I've been calling this novel dog shit all this time, but hearing those things from someone else made me feel kind of depressed.

[You will have to go through events from time to time. There are various types, from minor to major events. Most of the rewards will be in the form of achievement points.]

I couldn't find anything as convenient as a settings window. I didn't need something like volume control, but couldn't you at least give me some kind of interface?

It didn't seem like there was anything like that.

[You can change the main story by preventing things that should happen or making things happen that shouldn't. In case you do such things you might get more achievement points than for normal events.]

[Additionally, you can also earn some through 'Challenges'. If you succeed in overcoming a challenge, you will get achievement points.]

What did they mean with Challenges?

[Challenges are challenges. If you would like to take on a challenge, please check the 'List of currently available Challenges'. The entries are updated periodically. Some challenges may not appear again.]

When I checked the Challenge list, I immediately understood what they were.

[Slap the Emperor across the face (Full swing only) – 10000 Points]

[Get imprisoned in the Gardium Prison – 1200 Points]

[Escape from the prison after getting imprisoned – 2000 Points]

[Pickpocket a Knight without getting caught – 100 points]

[Buy an over 1067 m^2 house with money earned from begging – 1000 Points]

.

.

.

Somehow, I felt like there were no normal options on the list

Slap the Emperor? You want me to exchange my life for achievement points? I think it's impossible for me to get an audience with the Emperor in the first place, you know?

What's with this feature that made one feel like crap by just looking at it?

So what else was there? I need to know these things first.

[As a reward for clearing the Prologue, the privilege of using achievement points has been given.]

[Achievement points are used for 'Revising' functions such as changing certain settings of this world, forcibly granting you certain talents, making events happen that shouldn't or prevent events from happening that should. Furthermore, the function 'Preview' can be used limitedly, to check the changes your actions have caused. However, interfering with big events or main characters is impossible or requires a fairly large amount of achievement points.]

[Be careful not to cause a 'Setting Collapse'. If you are not able to recognize the collapse of the setting and try to add new settings or try to 'revise' the event, you will be penalized. If your memory is bad enough to cause a setting collapse in your own novel, I recommend you to add the setting 'A cure for Alzheimer's exists in this world.']

It didn't seem that serious in the beginning, but are you trying to pick a fight with me? Am I imagining things ?

[Keep in mind, you cannot remove settings that have been added or already exist.]

[For example if the setting 'The Dragon can't be killed' was already in place you won't be able to add the setting 'The Dragon can be killed'.]

[Of course, while you were alive you used to paste additional settings to your already existing one's later on, regretting the choices you made like an idiot, like 'Actually, the Dragon couldn't be killed normally, but it was possible using the Dragon Slayer OO'. Frivolous behavior such as adding 'additional settings' Like "It's XX but it was actually OO' will require more achievement points or will not be tolerated.]

I definitely did not imagine things, it was the truth. You were really picking a fight with me.

What's with this? It wasn't just here to help me. This felt like I was reading malicious comments written by someone who absolutely hated me. Why were these descriptions charged with emotions?

There was clearly some malicious intent behind these mysterious messages. Just looking at the mention of what I did when I was still alive, made it obvious. And just hearing about the additional settings made me feel like shit.

That seriously broke my heart. I'm not joking. I'm 100% serious.

People tend to feel bad if they are faced with the uncomfortable truth. That was a fact.

Just who was writing this? Was it in real time?

Then a sudden thought went through my mind. Was everything that happened here actually broadcasted to the outside?

'Come, watch some asshole newbie writer get punished.'. Maybe it was titled like this?

No, well, I wasn't that bad, you know… So if this was getting broadcasted, who was doing that? 'Cause Frick you.

[Achievement point requirements are subject to change. A feature that may have cost you 100 points yesterday might cost 200 points or 50 points the next day. It might not even work anymore.]

I wondered if it would respond to my thoughts, but I was a little disappointed as it didn't address any of them. Were you telling me that my thoughts weren't even worth dealing with?

After that, numerous actions that could be done using Achievement Points were listed.

I felt something the moment I saw that.

So.

It seemed like this was my cheat.

It was a cheat, but an oddly uncooperative cheat.

It seemed like I, as a writer who was sent into his own novel, had the ability to directly interfere with this world's common sense. I was pretty sure that was what the functions 'Revise' and 'Add Settings' were for. So my purpose was to rewrite my novel and make it a little more interesting.

But.

It had clearly stated earlier that it would take 100000 points to add something to race settings.

Also, I was being punished, not rewarded here.

Based on the developments so far, I don't think this will help me much. To begin with, the fact that I reincarnated as the Demon King's son didn't feel that random anymore. I could feel a lot of malice mixed into all of this.

These functions might turn out to be important someday, but I only had 1100 achievement points.

What could I do with these?

[For example, take this situation: you can trigger the event 'The bakery owner gives you, a poor beggar, a piece of bread.' to satisfy your hunger, which wouldn't otherwise happen. Of course, if the subject is less altruistic it would require a greater amount of achievement points to trigger this event. This means that it would require a large amount of achievement points to cause something that would seriously violate the 'Law of Probability'. You know the Law of Probability, right? the one you repeatedly screwed with? The biggest reason why you gave up on your novels after getting criticized for ruining the story and being unable to fix it, giving only ugly

excuses.]

What do you mean, a beggar? I've got plenty of other opportunities! That's just too much.

Reading that description, it felt like it was written by one of the victims of my bad habits.

I didn't really know who they were, whether it was the will of this world or God, but they must've really hated me.

And why were there so many restrictions?

So, big things, such as interfering with the main characters or causing the death of someone, who was unlikely to die, under the guise of an accident, would, of course, require an insane amount of achievement points or would be entirely impossible.

No.

But wouldn't I be able to do 'that' if I had a lot of achievement points? That.

That 'Half die' move or something like that.

Wasn't this actually one hell of a cheat?

Achievement points could eventually be used to revise and add settings on a larger scale. In the end, it was a matter of scope and scale and it not deviating from those two frameworks.

For example, one could understand this as being able to rewrite a novel.

However, I wondered if I could break through my current situation with just 1100 achievement points. While looking through the functions that used achievement points, I discovered a peculiar one.

[Function – A Writer's advice]

What's this? Advice from who now?

[Sometimes, you may find yourself before a crossroad or you may not know how to

proceed. In that case, you can execute ‘A Writer’s Advice’ to receive advice from the writer on what to do next.]

[This feature is of rather low cost, but usually it’s unknown what consequences said advice will lead to or what purpose it serves.]

[Sometimes the Writer’s Advice is a trap. Following it could have bad consequences for you. It’s common to receive both good and bad results simultaneously. There’s rarely just a good outcome.]

[Advice can be divided into ‘Clear Advice’ and ‘Vague Advice’. ‘Clear Advice’ suggests certain actions, but is more likely to lead to bad results, while ‘Vague Advice’ is more likely to have only good outcomes, although it is hard to guess the intent behind it.]

[Wish you the best of luck.]

[(・◡・)]

You don’t even pretend to be an explanatory text anymore.

I felt my heart breaking just by reading that description.

* * *

There were many things I could do with my current amount of points. If I went to a grocery store with a generous owner and caused an event, I would be able to get food.

However, that was just temporary. It would be great if I made a kind, wealthy family accept me as their adopted child, but I didn’t know how many points that would cost. And also, how was I to find out if they were a nice family or not?

Also, who is that description person? Why do they hate me so much?

If one told me they were a collection of people that hated my guts, I’d believe it.

After examining various possibilities, in the end, the only thing I could really try right now was ‘A Writer’s Advice’.

There was a possibility of the advice being a trap, but its price was low.

[A Writer's Advice – 150 Points]

I was told that the achievement point cost was variable. After some time, the prices might suddenly inflate and it might end up costing more than a thousand points.

It was also up to me whether I took the advice or not.

I executed 'A Writer's Advice'.

[Clear Advice]

[Vague Advice]

There were two options. Clear Advice was easy to understand but was most likely a trap and Vague Advice was the complete opposite.

And if one took the advice, most of the time good and bad things would occur simultaneously.

I mean, it couldn't really get any worse than my current situation. Homeless and hungry.

No, it could be worse. My life could be in danger.

Still, to increase my odds even by a little I chose [Vague Advice].

[A Writer's Vague Advice]

[How did so many people get kidnapped to the Demon King's Castle?]

What.

What's with this?

This went beyond vague, and straight up had nothing to do with my situation at all.

What's with that riddle all of a sudden?

No, couldn't you at least tell me something like 'Go this way, go that way'? I thought some voice would tell me what to do, but instead this riddle suddenly appeared. I

was dumbfounded.

Kidnapped to the Demon King's Castle.

What was I supposed to do with this? Let myself get kidnapped?

This obviously wasn't a trap, which I thought was good. If this were a trap, they would have made it a lot more clear, otherwise I'd doubt their intelligence.

"Sigh…"

As I sighed deeply while looking at the ground, a guy passing by looked at me strangely.

Do you even know how I feel?

If I knew how these people got kidnapped, would my situation be any better? They were just kidnapped. I didn't know how vague that advice was supposed to be, but this was hella cryptic.

I'd rather it gave me some solid advice.

"……Huh?"

Oh, right

Couldn't I try it one more time?

[A Writer's Advice – 150 Points]

I wasn't told that I couldn't use it repeatedly.

No, wait, why is it like this?

Back when I was alive, I really hated these types of gacha games, so I didn't even try to play any of these, so why did I have to do something like this after coming to another world.

It's not like I poured a thousand won into buying some gacha crystals or something. However, I did have to put my life on the line to get these points, so I couldn't help

but cry bitter tears.

I chose Clear Advice this time.

[A Writer's Clear Advice]

[Go to the Magic Tool Shop]

Yes.

That's the type of advice I was looking for.

Who'd have known.

CHAPTER 11

Go to the Magic Tool Shop.

It was an intuitive and clear message and I could immediately understand what this advice was about.

One of the biggest problems I was facing was:

Money.

When I saw the word Magic Tool Shop, I couldn't help but get this idea right away. I didn't have anything other than the clothes on my body and my labour to offer.

And the scrolls remaining in the Scroll book.

If I were to sell the scrolls to a magic tool shop, I'd, of course, make lots of money. Scrolls were expensive after all.

The intentions I read out of this were to first put out the big fire by selling these to get money.

However, I wasn't that reassured. The Writer's Advice would have good but also bad effects simultaneously in most cases.

It advised me to sell the scrolls to raise money.

A bad outcome I could think of would be the possibility of getting ripped off, of course. I didn't know the market price, so the store owner would probably try to rip me off. I didn't know the exact value of magic scrolls.

But I clearly remember Dyrus saying something like:

'The Demon King's Castle sure is amazing, even lower level scrolls are often more expensive than my salary.'

A lower level scroll was worth more or less the salary of a Lieutenant of the Imperial

Army's Cavalry.

So how much did a Cavalry Lieutenant earn?

As a (Self-proclaimed) Medieval Fantasy Specialist, I knew a thing or two about this.

There were always descriptions of how many gold coins one needed to feed a family of four, as well as, how much a regular person with an ordinary job would earn in a month.

Of course, I also wrote about those things.

In the case of this novel here, I had written that a gold coin was equivalent to a month's food expenses for a family of four. And a regular person with an ordinary job earned about 2 gold coins a month.

So.

I thought 1 gold coin = 1 million won. (T/N: ca 730 Euro)

It was easier to work with if I converted it like that.

How could a family of four live on just a million won a month? Wouldn't they want to eat out at some point? Our house spends about 400 on food, you know?

I got these kinds of comments, but they'll get by somehow.

These weren't living expenses, they were just food expenses. There were no such things as comprehensive insurance, health insurance or telecommunication costs in this world after all!

I, as a (self-proclaimed) Medieval Fantasy Expert say:

One who seriously researches about the historical background is but a rookie!

There are just some things one wouldn't be able to see if one didn't empty their minds.

I felt sorry for those who weren't able to enjoy this beautiful medieval fantasy world of magic, knights and social infrastructure that has virtually no science.

I have lived by the following ideals:

The focus of Medieval Fantasy isn't on the Medieval part, but on the Fantasy part!

It's not a 'Medieval' Fantasy, but a medieval Fantasy!

Most of them didn't even have anything to do with the Middle Ages! It was kind of like a buzzword!

Anyway, How about we do OO with the setting of XX, lol?

The genre Medieval Fantasy was created by such shallow thoughts, however what unfolded in front of our eyes is a fantastical world that had nothing to do with the Middle Ages!

…This was fantastical in a different sense.

Let's sell the scrolls and live on to see another day.

I was neither a wizard nor was I a knight, although I do have the ability to rule over demons, however as I was a Demon Prince who had fallen to the Imperial Capital, Gardium, there wasn't even a single demon around here.

"……Excuse me. Could you give me some directions?"

"…Huh? directions?"

I tried to ask a passerby, who felt some silent embarrassment for the way I spoke, for the most important thing right now.

"Oh! Are you lost?"

No, well, a little.

* * *

The ones who mainly used magic tool shops were adventurers and wizards. Of course, This wasn't an adventure novel, so while there were people who were adventurers, that didn't really describe what they did. They did have a job, but I've never really thought about that.

…Come to think of it, how did adventurers make a living in this world? Did they get by with quests from the Adventurer's Guild and monster subjugations? Was there even something like an Adventurer's Guild?

There were adventurers, but I hadn't set up what they earn or through what means.

If one thought about it, that was seriously weird.

When I tried thinking of ways adventurer's earned their money, I could only think of dungeon explorations and monster subjugations.

However, if that's how adventurers earned their money, that would also be a problem.

There was a regular army, so why did freelancers like adventurers do things like monster subjugations? If the country outsourced personnel to get rid of security issues, such as monster dens and raids, why did that country even exist? What did the citizens pay taxes for?

Although the Warrior Artorius actually killed the Demon King, but the Empire and its Principalities, that had enough military power to take on the Demon Army, solved their monster problems through the Adventurer's Guild? What were the soldiers good for then?

So, if the regular army took care of monster subjugations and there were no such quests coming from the Adventurer's Guild, then how did the adventurers earn their keep?

Well, if the whole world was filled with dungeons for adventurers to plunder wouldn't that be weird as well? Why were rare magical items just rolling around in a dungeon and no country went to claim them for themselves? Wouldn't they usually do something like nationalizing the dungeons so that adventurers wouldn't monopolize them?

Wasn't the existence of adventurers in and of itself a setting error judging by this world's common sense?

"……"

If one started to pay attention to historical accuracy, one would lose, but I started to

worry a little.

It really bothered me.

Since I started to think that this was the world I had to live in, I seriously tried to move on from that topic.

Let's not think about this anymore. It's not like hungry adventurers would just rush up to people asking for a penny. If adventurers didn't have jobs, they'd just be robbers or even bandits.

There was just one thing I really had to care about.

To not get ripped off in the Magic Tool Store. I had to get at least 1 gold piece for each scroll. I was planning on keeping constant eye contact, to appear strong. I didn't think it was too much to ask for a regular price. However, if they were to whine about the quality being not up to par or something, I'd never sell it to them.

I planned to go eat somewhere after I got some money.

I was so hungry.

Afterwards, I should find an inn and take some time to organize my thoughts.

There were positive points about the Writer's advice in that it clearly determined what I should do, regardless of whether the advice was right or not.

If the advice was unconditionally good, I'd just empty my brain and follow what it told me.

Oh, is that why there were traps in there? They wanted me to stay on my toes?

Did they want to see me struggle or something?

* * *

As the main stage of the story, I had to describe the Capital Gardium in quite detail.

No, well, I didn't go quite as far as describing every single brick. It was just specific areas.

However, setting up an imaginary place was quite cumbersome. It was pretty difficult, because there was a strong possibility that I might make mistakes and if it wasn't properly set up, one would just get confused later on.

That said, the Capital Gardium was pretty similar to Seoul.

Was it just similar?

Well, I must confess, it was just Seoul with a different name.

This was my description of the Imperial Capital.

'A great Irene river runs through the Imperial Capital Gardium, splitting it in the northern part where the imperial palace was located and the southern part where the temple was located. The river's huge tributaries serve as its borders.'

Could you see it?

Gangnam and Gangbuk.

'In the center of the northern part of Gardium lies the Imperial Palace Emperatos.'

In other words, the Imperial palace in Jongno. Of course, it wasn't as big as Gyeongbokgung Palace, the entire Jongno District was the imperial palace after all.

'In the southern Eredian district, one of the Capital's two greatest landmarks, the Temple, the other one being the Imperial Palace, was located. It was also a gigantic educational facility and the cradle of many talented young people.'

In other words, the Temple was in the Gwanak District.

So Eredian District = Gwanak District.

So I ended up setting up the Capital Gardium as a space so similar to Seoul that the only thing different about it was the name. The districts also had medieval sounding names.

This was an actual sentence out of the novel.

[The main character's party sprinted all the way from the Gehenna district to the

Eredian district. The effect of their physical training was showing.]

How the scene actually appeared in my mind:

'The main character's party ran from the Dongjak District to the Gwanak District.'

It was kind of like that. I wouldn't even need to create a different map. I could just imagine Seoul's map and change the district names. It was convenient and I felt good about myself. If one just drew up an imaginary map, the readers wouldn't even be interested in it. I did that when I was in middle school, but there was no one who was even remotely interested in it. That was when it hit me.

These maps of imaginary worlds were for the writer and not the readers. The reason Gardium seemed like Seoul was entirely because of my needs.

The Temple was in Gwanak and the Imperial Palace in Jongno.

The place I got teleported to was the Al Ligar District. Later it would be changed to Artorius District in honor of the hero. They would build a huge statue of him as well.

Where was this Al Ligar District and later Artorius District located, you ask?

This was Yongsan.

Of course, it was just the topography and division that were similar, the buildings were completely different, so this was just like a neighborhood I never went to before.

I arrived in Yongsan, so I headed towards the shopping district, which was about where the Yongsan Electronics Market was.

Even though this was an imaginary place, maybe because it was that kind of region.

"What kind of crappy scrolls are these? Dude, where did you get this stuff?"

As if proving that this was Yongsan, I encountered a gangster like bastard in my first try.

* * *

At the shop owner's first words, I went back out to the streets thinking that I wouldn't be able to do some immediate business with that owner, which I had already engraved as a gangster in my memory. He muttered something, but I didn't even listen to what he was saying.

Every building around this area was a shop. Thousands of people were passing by, looking at things. Were all these people adventurers?

How was being an adventurer lucrative? Was there some kind of way to earn money that I wasn't aware of? Actually, it had to be like thatt, otherwise there wouldn't be so many of them.

It felt strange. As if someone filled my plot holes for me.

Noise came from every corner of this place.

"Oh, young adventurer! I just opened up! Hey, since it's this store's opening, I'll sell to you at half the price, how about it?"

"Oh, so ya looked and touched all these things, but you're not gonna buy anythin? Ya not gonna buy even one thing? Ha, you're makin me laugh. Hey, follow me for a sec. Oh, come on, huh, ya won't come? No! Let's just talk for a sec. Who's harassing ya? Huh? Makin a thug outta me now, are ya? I'm hurt. Ya want me to show ya what a real thug is? Huh? Want me to rough you up?!"

"Refund? Look at that bastard. Didja shit in ya lil panties and come crawling here for a refund? What kinda bitch are you, huh? Get your ass outta here!"

"Hey, bro, ya put a scratch on it! How can I sell it now, huh? Imma just cut it half, so take it! I'm selling at a loss here, ya know? Still not gonna buy it? Really now? Should I call the guards, huh? Let's see who's right, huh? Ya sure bout this? Really sure? Where ya from? Argand? Ya know big bro Rand then? Never heard of 'im? Hah. What a son of a bitch! Hey, take it while I'm still bein nice here. Don't make me angry."

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No.

What's with this?

Why did it really turn into Yongsan?

What unfolded before me was the medieval version of Yongsan.

"Was everyone like this?"

I felt like prey.

"Oh, well, erm. I'll… I'll just look for some other place…"

I tried my best not to get devoured.

– Hey, don't make eye contact. Don't meet their eyes. There are some crazy bastards who won't even buy stuff and just unpack it and take it.

– They're all retired adventurers, so they're good at fighting. If you pick a fight, you'll get one of your arms or legs broken.

Even the people who knew what this place was, came in groups.

Just when I was imagining Yongsan, what spread out in front of me was really the Yongsan I had in my mind.

And here I was, a 17-year-old push over that tried to sell magic scrolls from the Demon Realm to people who were even worse.

Yongsan.

Just that one word made me feel like it was an impossible endeavour.

CHAPTER 12

As I found out later, the Al Ligar district's shopping district was notorious among adventurers. It was a place filled with unscrupulous merchants who nearly forced people to buy things, never refunded and charged them several tens of times of the market price.

Nevertheless, it was the largest shopping district in the Imperial Capital and most items necessary for adventurers could only be purchased there, so it was a notorious place that, alas, couldn't be avoided.

Well, it was the same as the old Yongsan Electronics Market. Just a fantasy version of it.

It was a place novice adventurers were more scared of than dungeons. A place where it was common for people who wanted to start out as adventurers to give up on these thoughts.

The victims were mostly just teenaged novice adventurers who came here with their saved up pocket money.

Was it PTSD? I felt my whole body shaking.

That bastard who sold me MP3s. Are you doing well, I wonder?

You have to live a good life. If you just continue to live such a bad life, wouldn't that be sad, huh? Wouldn't it?

Let's calm down.

Among these many gangsters, I had to find a proper magic tool shop to sell these scrolls to. No, well, at first that felt easy enough, but it seemed like the difficulty just rose absurdly high suddenly.

Somehow it felt impossible to do.

Just by knowing the fact that this was Yongsan.

There were many shops such as weapon shops, armor shops, tool shops, etc. however, I was looking for a magic tool shop. A magic tool shop was basically a place where a lot of money changed their owners pretty quickly, different from these other shops.

“What do you want? Don’t touch anything and get out.”

I couldn’t even enter most of the shops because the owners were afraid I might touch a scroll and activate it. I also didn’t look like an adventurer.

The first store owner was actually rather kind as he let me in.

Even though there were some who strangely let me come in, their reactions weren’t that good.

The merchant looked at the scroll that I said I was going to sell and frowned.

“……What’s this? Were you gonna sell these for money? Look at that brat. Don’t make a fuss and get out. Well, I can give ya two bronze coins for these.”

What?

Did all the gangsters collude or something? How could they slap me in the face like this? I wasn’t sure about 2 gold coins, but you wouldn’t even give me 1? Didn’t that guy have at least that much conscience left in him?

I didn’t say anything, grabbed my scrolls and left. They were just a bunch of crooks not worth talking to.

However, the response from the next shop was also poor.

“Haha, what’s this? It’s my first time seeing someone trying to scam me like this. Ah, what bad luck. Get out of here, bastard!”

There were some who kicked me out as soon as they saw the scrolls.

After getting turned down like this three times in a row, I realized that something was odd.

What did they mean, scam?

The next store treated me the same. I got sent off two consecutive times with the words “What’s with this nonsense?!”.

“What the hell do you think of people doing business here, huh? Do you think we wouldn’t be able to tell the difference?!”

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“Don’t just doodle these weird things and actually learn how to draw.”

It was a rather friendly reply, but I still got turned down.

They looked at me as if I was some madman trying some weird scam by selling fake scrolls.

This bizarre situation was going on instead of the good and bad outcomes I was expecting. Everything that the Writer’s Advice hinted at went wrong.

Were they thinking that the scrolls I took out weren’t the real deal just because I looked young? Did they think these were fakes that just looked kind of similar?

I had to show them that they actually worked, but if I activated a scroll I’d just waste it. I couldn’t blow my capital like that. If I showed them and then asked for money afterwards, I’m pretty sure they wouldn’t give it to me.

The next place I went to was more out-of-the-way.

“Ho-oh…”

The shop owner glanced at the scroll and his eyes lit up. I thought he was someone who could finally recognize these scrolls’ true value without being prejudiced.

To be honest, I was exhausted, so I just wanted to finally sell them even if he ripped me off badly. The man suddenly fumbled through his drawers and pulled out a scroll.

“Hey, you shouldn’t draw this, try doing these, these and these.”

He did recognize the value.

“If you can draw the same thing, I’ll give you five silver coins each. How about it?”

The only problem was that he saw value in me and not in the scrolls.

It seemed like that guy was misunderstanding something greatly, trying to make me mass-produce fake scrolls to sell.

I was almost flabbergasted by this devilish idea that transcended dimensions.

The owner kept on raising the remuneration even though I didn’t do anything, and in the end, he offered me 1 gold coin per sheet.

I had never seen such a vicious bastard before.

“Oh, come on! Fine! Let’s go 50/50! Okay? But you’ll have to rake in lots of money for me, got that? So young and already so ferocious…… Huh.”

It was tempting, but I wasn’t the one who drew these so I really couldn’t do it. However, I did feel in awe, seeing the eyes of that man coveting talent that I didn’t have.

He was such a crook that I almost genuinely wanted to punish him. No, well, scrolls were supposed to be used in emergencies. If the scroll turned out to be fake, that person trying to use it would most likely die, right?

You were playing with people’s lives here, you know? He was the top bastard among these petty thugs.

I ended up sighing and nodded my head.

“Sure, can I bring you the finished products tomorrow?”

Just looking at these complex shapes, it was probably impossible for me to replicate them here.

“O, ooh! Yes, yes! Can you bring it in tomorrow?”

“I might have to stay up all night.”

“Oh, good! Yeah! I’ll give you the money as soon as I get it! The profit’s 50/50, so if

they get sold, we'll split the profits! You know there's no business like this, right, buddy?"

You wouldn't tell me even if you sold one, you bastard.

I left the shop with the scroll the merchant handed to me.

– You're going to make me a fortune!

Hearing the sounds coming from behind me made me involuntarily sigh.

What's with this?

Was that guy's head only filled with greed? Was he the type of person that couldn't see clearly ahead of him because of his own greed?

Anyway.

I got a Fireball Scroll for free.

* * *

I came to sell a scroll and saw the extraordinary profit of earning one scroll. Fireball was an attack spell, and unlike other novels who treated this spell as one of the basics, Fireball was quite a powerful spell in this world.

Why was a spell that created an explosion right in front of you only a basic spell?

I was a stubborn bastard, that insistent on not caring about historical facts.

However, these things bothered me.

Honestly though, I didn't think that much about it.

Could anyone just carry a fireball scroll or something? Shouldn't it be banned by law? Well, wasn't this like selling rocket launchers like RPG-7s on the street? Weren't these just fantasy versions of dynamite?

Medieval Fantasies were just dreamlands for terrorists.

I should have put various restrictions on magic scroll trading when I was writing about this. Back then I had no reason to worry about these laws and regulations, but now that I had to live here, I felt they were much too lax.

Of course, I didn't create an entire set of laws for the Gardias Empire when I was describing it. However Imperial Laws should exist and it's obviously going to be a huge amount.

It's not like the parts I haven't described didn't exist, however this environment where anyone could just use magic scrolls certainly didn't seem safe to me.

This was dangerous…

People seemed to think my scrolls were fake. I had no idea if they thought that because I was just some kid who didn't seem like he'd be able to get his hands on scrolls at all or if there was some other reason.

I walked endlessly and finally found another magic tool shop on this street filled with gangsters. Maybe I should check and see if there was just a problem with my wares.

"Um…… Are you a customer?"

There was a disheveled person who seemed to have slept on the table, raising her head in this scroll shop filled with the smell of paper and ink.

She looked drowsy, not at all willing to do business.

"I'm here to sell magic scrolls."

"Huh? Sell scrolls? You?"

"Yes."

I took out the Fireball scroll and put it in front of her. The merchant woman unfolded the scroll and glanced over it, frowned and then hit my head.

-Bang!

"Argh! Why are you hitting me?!"

“It’s dangerous for a kid to carry things like these.”

The woman frowned and shook her head as if she couldn’t believe it.

“I usually don’t buy stuff like this, but I’d rather buy it off of you, so that you can’t carry this around with you anymore.”

She said something like “It can’t be helped so I’ll take it off of you”. What a gangster-like expression.

“4 gold. It’s useless even if you don’t want to sell it for that. I won’t return it to you.”

I got my hands on a lot more money than I planned on getting.

“Uh…”

“I won’t ask where you got this from, but if you’re caught carrying these things around, you’ll get scolded. You got that? I’ll remember your face.”

She wasn’t a gangster who made hard sales but one that forcibly bought things.

It was at that moment that I changed her name from gangster to kind beautiful shop owner inside my mind.

No, actually, scratch that. It should be Great Beauty.

Anyway, I sighed heavily.

“Tch, kids really don’t know how to be afraid of magic.”

It looked like she really bought it because this was something dangerous. Whatever, I got my money.

“Thank you.”

I bowed my head and tried to leave the shop. I had to buy some things with these. I had to be careful not to let it get stolen or to get ripped off. I also had a lot on my mind.

“Wait.”

The owner called out to me.

“You, come here.”

With a very languid expression on her face, she told me to come to her, then she came out from behind the counter and approached me.

“Why are you wearing a scroll book? Take them all out.”

It felt like I got caught red handed.

“Uh, I. There…”

It seemed like she’d take it all away, if I had any more dangerous magic scrolls. She dragged me to a chair and took away my scroll book.

“You picked something up someone lost, didn’t you? You didn’t even try to return it to the owner and thought about selling it, huh? You brat. You must be mad.”

She clicked her tongue while saying “What are kids doing these days?”. She seemed convinced that there was absolutely no way that I actually got these on my own. Well, the source was actually pretty questionable.

She pulled out a scroll, unfolded it, looked at it and frowned.

“……What’s this?”

She seemed puzzled, then she went to her counter and unfolded the Fireball Scroll I gave to her.

“…It’s true.”

It was at that moment, I realized that there must have been a good reason as to why so many merchants thought I was trying to trick and scam them.

The merchant unfolded my scrolls one by one, and gradually became speechless.

She sat next to me and gently wrapped her arms around my shoulders.

“Baby.”

No.

No matter how young I was, I absolutely wasn't like a baby.

The woman's voice was endlessly sweet.

"……Ye, yes?"

"You have to be honest, okay?"

Also, she bore a sense of ingenuity that seemed to want to peer inside of me.

"Where did you get all these scrolls?"

"Yes…… Yes?"

"This is the magic construction method used by demons. Why do you have these?"

A Writer's Advice usually led to both good and bad outcomes.

I could definitely see now what they meant with that.

CHAPTER 13

There was magic.

That's as far as my set up went, so of course I didn't know 'How' it worked. It wasn't my role to know how magic worked or how it manifested.

How did magic work, what were the magic formula and what was mana…?

Who the hell would want to read up on that bullshit in a fantasy novel?

To begin with, what's even the difference between explaining how magic worked or how there was a black flame dragon sleeping in ones right arm? It was just a setup.

If one got that, than one could also just move on. Even if you don't mention all the details of some old, dusty martial technique vault in martial arts novels, the reader would understand what was going on just by reading the line. In other words, that was what one called shared common sense.

However, there was a principle and way that overthrew said common sense.

The magic system of demons and humans were different. They used the same kind of magic, but in different ways. They were like how steam locomotives and modern trains ran on the same kind of track.

Therefore, a scroll inscribed with demonic magic was capable of ultra-long distance teleportation, while a scroll containing human magic wasn't.

It was impossible for me to distinguish between human and demonic magic just by looking at the formula. It was a mistake that stemmed from my ignorance and lack of understanding of just what I was trying to do here.

The other merchants couldn't recognize the magic formulas of demons, probably because they weren't wizards, so they thought the scrolls were fake. However, this woman who was both the magic tool shop owner and probably a wizard recognized that my scrolls were working with a different systems.

“Won’t you tell me? Please?”

I didn’t know what that woman would do to me.

Could I somehow get through this situation using my achievement points?

I had to make this woman think that my scrolls were insignificant.

[To trigger this event 3000 achievement points are required.]

Again, I needed more points than I actually had. I mean, it was highly unlikely to find demonic scrolls in the middle of the Imperial Capital after all, so that would seriously undermine probability.

In the end, I had no other choice but to open my mouth.

“Tha, that… Erm… A, at the… At the Demon King’s… Castle…”

“……What?”

I had no other choice but to tell her the truth.

“I bought them from the Demon King’s Castle……”

The woman frowned after hearing my words.

“What do you mean? You brought these scrolls from the Demon King’s Castle?”

The woman furrowed her eyebrows as if she couldn’t make sense of my words. However, these demonic scrolls made what I said believable apparently.

I recounted the whole story to her. The long story of how I ended up being imprisoned together with the princess in the Demon King’s Castle and how we used teleportation scrolls to escape from there. Then I told her that, after arriving at the Capital, I found myself all alone with no money and somehow had to find a place to live, so I tired selling these scrolls.

I even added that I didn’t know who I was because I lost my memory.

“Oh, my god… This is so absurd…… Do you want me to believe that? The princess has

been rescued?"

Dumbfounded she furrowed her brows even more. She looked into my eyes and sighed.

"You're lying. If you actually rescued the princess, you'd be given a noble title or whatever. Why are you alone, huh?"

That was natural. The price for saving the princess' life was beyond imagination. To the extent that it would seem absurd to just reject it and wander around alone.

The only logical explanation would be that I didn't save her, of course.

However, I was a master of 'additional settings', that is, finding excuses.

These settings were actually like that so as to avoid a setting error I'd just rearrange some words.

That's what it meant to be a specialist in making excuses!

"That… When we escaped, a lot of Duke Salerian's Knights died. I might get rewarded, but I thought Prince Bertus was going to try and kill me……"

"Ah, I see…… Retaliation…… Yes…… I guess, that makes sense…… It would probably be difficult for the princess to protect you…… Obviously……"

I was able to make use of the excuse I planned on giving the princess if she happened to stumble upon me in a completely different place by any chance. A reward would be good, but it was, of course, not as precious as my own life.

Of course, this was just an excuse, albeit an understandable one. I also hoped for Dyrus' safety. I was sure they'd plan to retaliate against him as well.

She stared at me.

"Your story is too elaborate to be made up on the spot."

It seemed like her last doubts had been solved.

She seemed to believe my story. With such a ridiculous thing in her hands it seemed

like she had no other choice but to believe my exciting story.

She sighed again.

“So, that means, the Demon King…… is dead…?”

“Yes.”

A strange light flashed in her eyes at my words. She seemed relieved, but I couldn’t determine if it was sorrow or joy she actually felt. She had been silent for a long time. Eventually, she looked at me with sad eyes.

“Yeah, that’s a relief. How hard it must have been for the young princess… How hard it must have been for you.”

She wrapped her arms around me and patted me on the back as if pitying me.

No, well, I wasn’t actually tortured.

“Well, I don’t actually remember any of that… So it’s okay.”

Let’s moderately circumvent this situation.

“Yes, I’m glad that you don’t have to suffer from such a bad memory. Thank God.”

She kept patting me on the back, telling me that it would be better to live without these memories and that it would be too painful to remember them. What, why was she being so kind to me? By the way, I was pretty hungry and had some things to sort out mentally, so I kind of wanted to leave, you know?

“Let me look at you for a second, kid. Still…”

“What?”

“There were definitely a lot of people who had memory problems after suffering sever torture, but you were trapped in a terrifying place such as the Demon King’s Castle. Right?”

No, it was originally my home sweet home, but the problem was that the hero’s party just decided to pay us a visit.

“Maybe there’s a curse on your body. So I…”

She looked at me with warm eyes.

“I’ll try to cast a simple spell on you. If you lost your memory because of a curse, your memory might return, but this spell can’t remove curses that are too strong…”

She formed a sign.

“Uh, hey, wait a minute!”

“Dispel.”

The spell had already been cast.

“……?”

She looked at me as if she had no idea what’s going on. Horns, and a skin color that was slightly different from a humans.

It’s not like she didn’t know what that meant. She just couldn’t accept it.

“Oh.”

A Writer’s Advice.

From now on I shall call it a son of a bitch.

“Yo… Your Highness…?”

However, the words that came out of her mouth completely changed my mind.

* * *

Your Highness.

Naturally I knew that’s what one usually calls a prince.

But why was there someone who recognized me in such a random place?

Of course, I knew what that meant. It was just hard to accept. The shop owner immediately knelt down in front of me.

“I, I… I, Eleris of the Demon Army’s Gardium Invasion team, greets His Highness the Prince.”

“U, uh…”

Was this good? This was a good thing, right? My mind was working on overdrive trying to interpret this situation and how I should treat this woman in front of me, who definitely was a Demon.

At least this wasn’t a dangerous situation, right?

“I believe, it would be better if you came this way first.”

She alternated looking at me and the store’s entrance, then led me into the warehouse behind her. If a customer came in while we stood in front of the entrance like that, they’d immediately discover that this store housed demons.

She cast a spell and soon there was a subtle change to her appearance.

“Hey, don’t you recognize me?”

Two fangs slightly peeked out from between her red lips.

Red eyes and pale skin.

I seemed to know what she was.

“A, a vampire…?”

“Yes, I’m Eleris Tuesday from the House of Seven Nights.”

What the hell kind of chuuni setting is the House of Seven Nights? I never wrote anything about those kind of things. Anyway, the other party seemed concerned about me. She carefully put a hand to my face, while I was still dumbfounded.

“Wait, don’t tell me…… Have you really lost your memory…?”

“Ah, uhm… Oh, I guess… I don’t remember much. Except for the fact that I was the Prince of the Demon Realm…”

I had no other choice but to be honest, as I thought it would be a hundred times better to just be honest than fake having memories I don’t have.

There was a strange light in her eyes again. I had no idea what kinds of emotions she felt.

“To leave the castle and come all the way here all on your own in such a situation…”

She held my hand carefully, looking like she was about to cry.

“What a stroke of luck. I don’t know how this came to be, but I feel like I have to give my thanks to the Gods.”

The vampire seemed to think that this was just an absurd coincidence, to the extent that she felt grateful towards God.

However, when I thought that this situation came to be because of the Writer’s Advice, it would probably be more fitting to thank the devil. It was a ridiculous coincidence for Eleris, however to me it was an inevitability.

Go to the magic tool shop.

Eleris might have recognized the demonic scroll because she was a wizard, but it was highly likely that she did because she was a Demon herself.

So, going to the magic tool shop to sell scrolls was just a disguise, there were actually hidden intentions behind this advice.

The message hidden in it was to find a demon spy who infiltrated Gardium and ask for help.

However, if I had been caught by a human wizard who happened to recognized that the scrolls were made by demons, I might have been in a tougher position. The outcome could have been rather dangerous, but in the end I really did meet a Demon spy.

After a moment.

Come to think of it, the Vague Advice hinted to something similar in the end.

[A Writer's Vague Advice]

[How could so many people have gotten kidnapped to the Demon King's Castle?]

Not 'Why' but 'How'.

I wrote that those people were kidnapped by spies from the Demon Realm who had infiltrated the Human Realm. The vague advice was a subtle message for me to find the spies, since they would still be in the Human Realm. However, I didn't even think of that, because I was completely lost and hungry.

If I had understood the vague advice, I would have gotten a clue that I had to entrust myself to a demon spy in Gardium. If I had moved carefully, it would have been absolutely safe.

The Writer's Clear Advice was quite risky but intuitive and the Writer's Vague Advice tried to hint at what I should be doing.

Vague Advice was relatively safe and Clear Advice presented some risks.

"Erm… Could there have been a human wizard capable of recognizing scrolls of the Demon Realm?"

I spoke informally, however Eleris didn't seem to mind it.

"There are some weridos who study even the magic of demons. I'm glad you came to me before you met any of them."

A chill ran down my spine at the thought what a disaster it would have been if anyone actually recognized these scrolls before I met Eleris. I could have seriously gotten myself killed.

She went back outside into her shop again, locked its door and took me upstairs.

"I shall do my best to serve you from now on."

Saying so, she sat me down on a sofa.

Soon, she began to tidy up her messy room.

Wait, she was a vampire.

So, why was this room so well lit? It wasn't a huge apartment, but wasn't there a lot of sunlight getting in?

"Hey, isn't this kind of dangerous for Vampires?"

She looked at me and nodded.

"I'm a Vampire Lord. I can handle this level of light. Of course, it isn't good for my body though."

No, I could see you flinch a little every time light hit you while you were straightening out the table cloth. Were you really okay?

"This was an annex to the store, so I don't have to pay rent. I also would have wanted to live in a dream like residential area like a semi-basement where the sun doesn't shine all year round, but the budget for my actions are rather tight…"

…*How sad.*

I didn't exactly know what a Vampire Lord was, but wasn't this just too sad for a high-ranking vampire?

I did understand that such an environment would be dreamlike for a vampire, but just hearing her say that she desired to live in a semi-basement was just too sad. A Vampire was worried about rent…

"Uh, wouldn't it be fine if you just made the landlord your kin?"

Come to think of it, wouldn't it be very easy for a vampire to get rich? Wasn't that common sense?

"I had a similar idea, but to create a kin, I would have to take on too many risks. It's not easy to create a kin while disguised as an ordinary person."

Eleris certainly was a strong vampire, but that didn't mean the ones she created would be just as strong. It was obvious that a normal man who suddenly avoided the

sun and stopped eating would be considered suspicious.

No.

Wasn't it actually quite difficult for Vampires, who were the Nobles of the Night, to blend in with human society?

After cleaning up moderately, Eleris looked at me.

"You must be hungry. Let me prepare some food."

"Huh? Uh…"

Don't Vampires drink blood? Do you even have any normal ingredients here?

As if aware of my concerns, Eleris put on a hooded robe.

"I'll be out for little while."

"N, no. Will you be fine?"

"I'll be alright."

Just because of me, this vampire went grocery shopping in broad daylight. I was dumbfounded at how easily she just said that.

Thank you so much and I'm sorry that I'm so ignorant and helpless!

After she quickly bought something to eat for me she looked so exhausted. I was close to tears.

CHAPTER 14

The Demons I saw at the Demon King's Castle ran rampant to save me. They seemed to recognize me even though I cast Camouflage on myself.

However, Eleris, who was also a demon, didn't recognize me, before my real appearance was revealed.

What was the reason for that? I pondered while Eleris was away, but I didn't come to an answer.

My ability to control demons was incomplete. That was the only guess I could make.

What Eleris bought were sandwiches and milk. She apologized to me for not having much to offer.

"I don't have that much leeway… I'm sorry, Your Highness."

As I ate gratefully, I tilted my head at the sudden thought I had.

"…Didn't you just buy a Fireball Scroll for 4 gold?"

"Oh. Tha, that was…"

She told me that it was too dangerous for a kid like me to walk around carrying something like that and just threw a huge chunk of money at me.

"I just thought it would be dangerous for a child to carry something like this… I'm sorry, Your Highness."

For a spy she was pretty sympathetic and compassionate. Was it fine to be so good-natured as a vampire? Was that how you spent all your money?

I took out the 4 gold coins I had stored and put them on the table.

"I don't think I could spend so much anyway, so I'll return it to you."

“Oh, that, that’s… Thanks.”

Anyway, I got a guardian who happened to be a high-ranking vampire now, so having all that money would seem pretty meaningless.

She was watching me eat with a sad expression on her face. What’s good is good. Because of her good natured personality, I gained a vampire protector. She could help me out in emergencies.

And.

That awkward mood still lingered.

There were some unknown emotions swiping over Eleris face when I told her that the Demon King was dead.

It clearly wasn’t anger at the loss of her master. It felt like relief.

Although I continued to eat casually, I didn’t stop thinking.

Eleris seemed happy that the Demon King died and about the fact that the Demon World War ended in the human’s victory.

So was this vampire a pacifist or something while still being a spy?

Or maybe she was influenced by the humans because she lived in Gardium for too long. Either way, this vampire was the kind of person who couldn’t even overlook a young boy like me carrying around a fireball scroll, even though she didn’t even know who I was.

And the emotions she showed while I was talking about the princess also felt like genuine sympathy and compassion.

She said, that she must have gone through so much hardship while still being so young.

This vampire hated war and felt joyous about its end.

I still didn’t know if she was happy about the war’s end or the human’s victory though.

She's taking care of me for now, but her loyalty towards the Demon King had disappeared a long time ago.

So what was the surviving Demon Prince to those who hate war?

Wouldn't he just be like the embers of a new war? Than it was obvious what her best choice would be if she wanted to avoid another war.

I see.

Beneath the hem of her robe, Eleris' fingertips were trembling violently.

Maybe she just felt weak because of her exposure to the sun, but maybe she actually just made up her mind on something, but was too afraid to go through with it?

Fear of having to completely end the Demon World, her hometown, with her own hands.

Disgust towards herself who was trying to kill the young and helpless me to prevent any more war from happening.

I wonder if she was really thinking like that or if this was just my imagination.

"Your Highness."

"Uh, ah… Yes."

"Have you really, really… Lost your memories, all of them?"

When Eleris asked me this with a trembling voice, I was almost certain of what she was trying to do.

"Yeah, I don't remember anything but who I was. I don't even know why this happened and I believe I definitely wasn't cursed or possessed."

"……"

"Well, whatever. Not that searching for my memories would change anything."

I didn't know if these words would reassure her or not.

“I’ve only gone through it for one day, but war sure is crazy.”

At these words, an indescribable joy flashed across Eleris’ face.

“The, then, ah, no! You are the master of the Demon Realm and the hope of all demons! You must have a strong heart and rebuild the Demon Realm and raise it up again…!”

She was trying really hard to say things she didn’t mean or stood behind.

“The Demon Realm has already fallen.”

“……”

“I neither intend to be the king of a country that doesn’t exist.”

Let’s drive it home.

“Nor should you act like the subject of a country that doesn’t exist.”

“……”

At these words, tears fell from the vampire’s eyes.

She proved her innocence by crying.

There was a time when novels like that dominated my childhood.

But vampires were able to cry in this world, huh?

After saying, that she was sorry for her behavior, Eleris went down to the first floor and didn’t come up for a while. It didn’t seem like what I said had any negative impact on her.

* * *

That night.

I lay in bed. Eleris said she’d watch over me, so she sat down on a chair by my bed, looking out the window from where some moonlight was pouring in.

It was said that Vampires were the nobles of the night.

She was really pretty.

I was looking at Eleris, who shone paley in the moonlight.

“Your Highness.”

“Don’t call me that.”

“……I’m sorry, but I can’t call you anything else.”

Eleris said so and kept talking without looking at me.

“You should never tell anyone else what you told me today.”

“There’s no reason to. If I were to say these things, I’d reveal that I’m a demon.”

“That’s not what I meant.”

That’s not why, Eleris said powerfully.

“Excluding me, there are two other infiltrators that have infiltrated Gardium.”

Yes.

That’s exactly what I expected, because she told me it was an Infiltration group.

“You will inevitably get to know the other two as well. It would be unacceptable for them if Your Highness continued hiding away from the world.”

“Who are they?”

“Count Argon Pontheus. And then there’s the one known as Irene’s Wild Dog.”

“One of them is a noble?”

Wasn’t that way more than a spy?

“Yes. He was the one who directly carried out the abduction of the princess and the

empress."

When I heard that it was him who kidnapped the princess, I flinched. Naturally, the demons here must have carried out the abduction themselves.

But it felt strange to think that the one who did it was someone like him and that he'd definitely be someone loyal to the Demon Realm.

I felt like I was faced with the uncomfortable truth that I was, after all, nothing more than her parents' enemy to Charlotte.

"Count Pontheus' real name is Sarkegaar. He's of the Dreadfiend race."

Fiends belonged to the demon tribe. Fiends were a sub-species of demons. But I didn't know what a Dreadfiend was.

Why did I get sent into my novel, only to find mostly things I didn't know about?"

"Could you elaborate?"

"Dreadfiends are basically demons who specialize in transformation magic, including counter magic. That's why he was able to fool the humans' eyes and penetrate into the aristocratic society, the heart of Gardias. He wasn't detected not because of the level of his transformation, but because he changed his race itself. You can think of them as being able to use abilities similar to Polymorph, one of the highest level magic spells, from birth."

There were many types of transformation magic. There was camouflage, which was a low-level magic spell. It was the one I used. Then there was the method of creating optical illusions with illusion magic, and the method of transforming for a short period.

However, polymorph was a highest level spell that could change one's very body structure. This kind of magic couldn't be lifted by using Detection or Dispel.

Dreadfiends could use abilities similar to that polymorph from birth. All this would have been much easier if I had turned into that kind of demon.

"He's absolutely loyal to the Demon King. Not only would he go to war, he would be willing to sacrifice even his soul if it meant he could rebuild the Demon Realm."

Weren't Fiends usually in the position of stealing souls? How loyal was he?

"So if he came to know that I wasn't interested in rebuilding the Demon Realm… it'd cause some real problems, wouldn't it?"

"I don't think it would be to that level, but he'd try to make Your Highness want to."

"He won't kill me?"

"You're the last Arcdemon. Without you, the Demon Realm cannot be rebuilt. So he will try to change your mind somehow."

Were Arcdemons such an important race? Right now, I was just a kid who couldn't do anything on his own.

"What if I still don't change my mind, then what?"

Eleris looked at me and smiled. Then she put her hand on my head. She had a low body temperature, but it felt good in its own way.

"Even if it means destroying everything you love, he will do it."

I had just arrived in this world, but Sarkegaar would do everything except kill me to make me the next Demon King.

"For now, please just go along with him. And it won't be too late to use your hand when you built up enough strength to overwhelm Sarkegaar."

"…Yes, well. Let's do that."

"He's also very competent. He'll be able to help Your Highness in a lot more ways than I'm capable of."

First of all, he was a spy, but he was also a noble. Sarkegaar is, after all, a loyalist. He wouldn't do anything that could cause me harm.

Actually, the most dangerous person to me was Eleris before I told her I wasn't interested in war. It seemed like Eleris was trying to kill me, though she looked like she wouldn't want to do that anymore.

“Wait, just out of curiosity, if I became the actual Demon King after going along with what he said, what would you do?”

“……I don’t know about that.”

Eleris sighed with a bitter smile.

“When that time comes, you’ll have to choose between me or Sarkegaar.”

“……”

Perhaps killing me now would be her best option to burn the roots of war, but Eleris didn’t seem like she was able to do that.

“You have to grow up to be good, Your Highness.”

“…I will try.”

I couldn’t believe that I was hearing these things from a Vampire.

“So what is that Irene’s Wild Dog?”

What was with that creepy nickname? Irene’s Wild Dog? Were they trying to seem cool? She scratched her cheek slightly.

“They…… There are illegal gangs in Gardium committing crimes in various places…… Something like that…… Irene’s Wild Dog is the head of one such gang.”

“……The demon sent as a spy became a gangster?”

What kind of dog was he supposed to be again?

Eleris wore an awkward smile showing her dumbfoundedness.

“Strictly speaking, rather than being a gang… They are just some people that stuck together. It’s just that it’s inevitable for violence to occur because they are together.”

“…Isn’t that a gang?”

“What should I call this…”

Eleris seemed even more hesitant than when she was talking about Sarkegaar.

“That’s how one turns out if the only thing one’s good at is fighting.”

Whatever it is, if the guy who’s going to help me is the head of a big organization, what was the harm in that? Eleris sighed deeply and muttered openly.

“They’re… a beggar.”

“……What?”

“The gang members are usually selling candies or something to people walking along the Irene River… In fact, that’s how they also earned our funds for our activity…”

…Isn’t this solicitng?

So the guy who was sent to Garnium by the demons became the head of an organization. And that’s also what they earned their activity funds? What kind of spy was that guy? Was this the medival version of the Beggars’ Sect?

Ah.

Irene’s Wild Dog.

It wasn’t just a chuuni name, but literally described them.

They were the abandoned dogs found at the Han river!

CHAPTER 15

So they were selling gum to people taking a walk by the Han River, or rather the Irene river. I had never seen a nickname so accurate before.

Eleris‘ lips were trembling, seeming like she also found this quite ridiculous just thinking about it.

“They’re a Lycanthrope.”

“……If my memory serves me right, isn’t that the one who peridocally turned into a wolf monster?”

“Yes, that’s right.”

To be honest, not even Eleris, who was a high-ranking vampire, didn’t seem to be in the right condition to be a spy. Although she’s able to walk under the sun, I could definitely see that she was having a hard time.

But even so, Eleris was able to withstand sunlight.

A Lycanthrope, who would lose their mind and become a monster as soon as the full moon hung in the sky, should act as a spy in the middle of Gardium? How come they hadn’t been caught so far?

Sarkegaar was the only one who was cut out to be a spy!

“…Isn’t that a bit disadvantageous for a spy?”

“Yes… However, we only had few resources… It seemed like a dangerous mission so there were not many who volunteered, and…… We were in a hurry, so…… Yeah.”

Were they the type of person who were pretty slow but fiercely loyal?

It was infiltrating into the heart of enemy territory after all, so it was no wonder none of the demons stepped forward. However, that Lycanthrope volunteered.

“So on the night of the full moon, it seems like they hide themselves in the sewers beside the Bronzegate Bridge.”

The Bronzegate Bridge.

Well.

I did say that this place was practically the same as Seoul.

If I remembered correctly, then the Brozegate Bridge should be the Banpo Bridge.

When the day of their transformation neared, they’d go into the sewers under the Banpo Bridge to hide.

“Living close to the Bronzegate Bridge was rather convenient, so they’d rather not go too far from it… As a result, thier appearance also became quite… unkept… There were quite a few passersby who mistook them for a beggar and gave them money…”

“So that wasn’t their original goal?”

“Yes. So, thinking what they were doing was right, they just sat there and kept begging.”

“Huh…”

Didn’t they have any dignity? Maybe it’s because of the Emperor but the people here were pretty generous.

They were a weirdo who I couldn’t decide if they were living thier life comfortably or recklessly. Eleris hesitated and continued her explanation.

“As a result, there were a lot of fights for that position, but as they were born a Lycanthrope while they themselves were a strong person with good fighting skills, it seems like there was no one who could match their fists… However, there were a lot of beggars there… so they would always have a drink with the person they fought against yesterday, and then… They just been hanging out with them and they go closer… There were just too many, so…”

Haha.

They were begging near Banpo Bridge and got into a fight over the position, defeated that guy and the next day the guy who got beaten up came over with a bottle of soju, saying something like “Oh yeah, yeah. Yesterday was my bad, right?”, and with this scenario repeating they made a lot of friends while drinking a glass or two. A rather big friend group.

It grew to such proportions that it couldn’t be maintained properly so it turned into an organization.

“…I don’t really know them, but they seem to be like quite the person.”

“…Yes… We also receive a lot of help from them…”

Eleris, who seemed to have no business skills at all, and Sarkegaar, who was sure to need a lot of money while living an aristocratic life.

Neither of them seemed like they’d be able to survive without the help of Irene’s Wild Dog.

“Huh… But Irene’s Wild Dog… That’s quite the fitting name.”

They could actually transform into one.

“They actually wanted to be called Irene’s Wolf, but I can understand why no one would want to call them that.”

That was kind of sad.

Anyway, that was quite good. I just can’t let Sarkegaar know that I have given up on the Demon Realm and Irene’s Wild Dog seemed like a complete weirdo, but they also seemed to have a sense of camaraderie. They did help the other two spies after all.

Eleris didn’t seem to have any intentions to cause me harm at the moment.

“Sleep. Your Highness. I will arrange a place for you to meet them in the near future.”

“Uh… Don’t you have to sleep as well?”

This was probably Eleris’ bed. She lay down next to me, saying she’d go to sleep as well. No, isn’t it actually kind of weird that a Vampire was sleeping at night…?

“Are you okay? If it’s uncomfortable for you, I could also sleep on the floor.”

“……Uh, um. It’s fine. Yeah.”

It was fine, but at the same time it wasn’t at all.

This was a good outcome, but isn’t it also kind of bad?

No matter if I got a cheat or not, I wasn’t happy with this in the least.

This is life, huh.

Cheat, fuck off. No one needs you.

And when morning came.

-Niaaarck!

I woke up to a Vampire screaming at the touch of sun light instead of an alarm clock.

* * *

Waking up from that fuss, I stood up and saw Eleris with her hair all frizzy.

“……Don’t you have blackout curtains or something like that?”

“I… I sleep a lot… If I don’t do this I wouldn’t be able to get up…”

Explaining as such with a hoarse and cracked voice she went out of the sunlight. I knew that Eleris was a really unusual Vampire, but using the sun as an alarm clock, that wasn’t something easy to imagine. If she couldn’t wake up fast enough, wouldn’t she die?

A Vampire who lived in a sunny and well-ventilated place. I knew she was a high-level vampire who just got by, but this was just too sad.

“Couldn’t you get Count Pontheus to give you a spare room in his house to live in?”

“It’s inefficient for spies to work in the same area. If one gets caught, wouldn’t the other go down as well?”

Eleris sighed while she changed her clothes.

……*Don't do this in front of me.*

I was still a 17 year old teenager!

"No, but have you never felt that it was quite unfair that one of you gets to live as an aristocrat?"

"Well, I don't really like places with a lot of eyes on me. Rather, I think Sarkegaar is living a much harder life."

Ah.

If one thought of it like that. Sarkegaar probably didn't have a single moment in which he could relax, right? While Eleris only had one enemy in this place. The sun.

"But if you feel uncomfortable living like this, I think you'd be better off staying in Sarkegaar's mansion. We don't even have enough supplies here to live a decent life."

I really didn't want to say this but…

"Bu, but I still want to continue living here…?"

"……?"

I didn't expect the day would come when I'd throw such a childish tantrum again.

No.

I was sure that Sarkegaar already had his hands full even if I wasn't trying to mooch off of him.

That wasn't necessarily the only reason.

Uh.

* * *

Insects had different feeding systems for adults and larvae.

For example, mosquito larvae lived in water and adult insects flew, so not only did they eat different things they had completely different ecologies. In that way, adult insects and larvae had completely unrelated prey, so they didn't compete for food with each other.

So, right now I was feeling like an insect.

It was because of Eleris, who watched me eating breakfast with a look devoid of any appetite. I was wondering if she just enjoyed watching me eat.

I was thinking about useless things.

"I'm just curious. Do you drink blood every few days?"

"Ehem… Well, once a week is enough."

"Does it have to be human blood?"

"Not necessarily, any lifeform with mana in their blood would do. I could use pigs or chickens as well. However, I would need a greater quantity of it. The blood of lower lifeforms contains relatively small amounts of mana."

Blood was blood, but it had to be blood containing a lot of mana. The ones that had blood with a high concentration of mana would be humanoids.

But once a week. That energy efficiency was no joke. They were higher life forms compared to humans to begin with. Put into human terms, that meant that one didn't have to eat for another week after having a bowl of ox blood soup.

Of course, the type of blood was important.

"By the way, if one were bitten by a vampire, wouldn't that make one a vampire as well?"

"In the case of wild vampires, there were often such cases where they weren't able to control themselves, but I'm not like that. As I said, I don't have a higher rank for nothing."

"Then… Will the person you suck blood out of die?"

“Piling up corpses is never a good thing, you know? I only take enough for myself so they don’t die. Because of that I had to turn a lot of subjects into vampires, but I’m very good at magic. The condition can be controlled to the extent that it wouldn’t impact their lives.”

As expected, Eleris was a peaceful vampire. It seemed like such things as good demons existed, huh.

“Then you do it mostly at night…?”

“It doesn’t have to be night for me to do it. I take it mostly from customers. Well, take it as a slight punishment for those that went out of line…”

Eleris smiled.

When such customers came around, she would probably use some type of fascination magic and take blood from them, huh.

……It was pretty scary now that I thought about it.

“Mr. Swinton from the store next door usually comes to mess around, so I get to eat deliciously every time. I’m thankful to him. Of course, I can’t do the things he wants me to do with him. He’s married, you know?”

“Ah… I, is that right?”

“I don’t like men who lack fidelity.”

Him, being a human wasn’t the problem, huh?

It seemed like the nearby merchants had their blood sucked by Eleris without their knowledge. Additionally, they came to this beautiful vampire on their own two feet.

She looked nice, but in the end she had a scary side to her.

“Talking with you, it seems like you haven’t only lost your memory but a lot of your knowledge as well.”

“Ah… Is that so?”

“Yes. I’ve heard that one usually only loses one’s memory, but in the case of Your Highness…”

Eleris tilted her head. She knew that I had amnesia, but it seemed like she felt weird because I lacked even basic common sense demons should have.

“It’s like you’ve become a completely different person…… I can feel it.”

Ah.

Did she notice?

But come to think of it, yeah.

In most possession stories, the main character tries to never reveal that he was actually possessing the body.

Why do I have to do that? Why could I not tell the truth? It’s not like I did that on purpose.

Rather, Eleris would probably feel relieved if I told her I was really a completely different person.

Still.

It’s a bit risky to gamble with this before I reached some level of trust with her.

“What kind of person was I?”

So I asked a question and didn’t give her an answer. I was the master of excuses and spouting bullshit.

If the person in charge asked me when I’d sent in the manuscript I’d answer with: “Why did that bastard ask me for a drink yesterday? If it wasn’t for him, I would have already sent it, but phew, ah, I’m getting pissed off suddenly.”

I would keep on sprouting this kind of nonsense.

Eleris was about to answer my question, with her arms crossed.

“Uhm…”

That attitude.

A worrying attitude!

I kind of got a feeling.

That damn game system…

“Yo, you… You weeere… A great prince. Yes, of course! An i, i, inspiration for all demons…… You’ve been a role model… Yes!”

Were you trying to spout bullshit just now?

CHAPTER 16

Looking at Eleris pale expression, I got a sense of what the former prince was like.

Following this mixed up development, I figured that this guy was quite the jerk.

“By any chance, did you ever have contact with me?”

Come to think of it, Eleris was able to recognize me right away. Of course, she might have seen me a few times, as a high-ranking vampire, but then Eleris muttered quietly.

“Well, I was your tutor… So I did.”

“…Were we pretty close then?”

Weren’t we supposed to be on pretty friendly terms then?

“B, but it was only for a short time. My ability was too low to teach Your Highness properly…”

It seemed like my personality was just too hard to bear with, so she either got fired or quit shortly after.

“Well, the past is the past. You have to life in the present, yes.””

Eleris seemed to want me to stop being curious about my past. I’m sure I was a total mess, but just to what extent?

“Wait, so the other spies also know me personally?”

“Uhm… Yes, definitely. But…”

Eleris grabbed my shoulders and looked me straight in the eyes.

“You’re the last Arcdemon. They’ll know what’s important.”

What.

That's scary.

* * *

The Demon King died.

The Demon World War ended in the Coalition's victory.

Unfortunately, the warriors also fell in battle after a fierce fight with the Demon King and the Four Heavenly Kings.

And, the Princess returned safe and sound.

Soon, the news was announced.

The street was filled with cheering people. The fact that people didn't have to die in the war with the demons anymore and the survival of the First Princess who was thought to be dead.

Not only the Imperial Capital, but the whole continent must have been filled with cheers.

"Wow, this is good."

"……Yes?"

"No, they're just very generous."

Eleris and I were walking down the street. I was just eating some chicken skewers that the overjoyed Stall owner said were for free.

Now that Eleris cast some magic on me I just looked like an ordinary boy to others. Eleris herself also used camouflage magic on her body.

The Victory of the Demon World War made the people of this Gangster filled neighborhood distribute things for free. Eleris didn't seem to understand how I, who lost everything in a single day, could enjoy some chicken skewers at my own nation's defeat party. She was glad that the war was over, but why didn't she look like it?

“If you can’t avoid it, enjoy it.”

“Ah, that, yes…”

Rather, my tension was much higher.

Well, it didn’t really have anything to do with me whether the Demon Realm was destroyed or not, right?

I was nothing more than a little kid protected by this beautiful vampire.

I wanted to live peacefully until the end just like this. Being cared for by someone like Eleris was rather peaceful and comfortable.

Of course, I knew best that this was almost impossible.

“Are they all there?”

“Yes, they are waiting for Your Highness.”

We were moving to meet the other remaining demons in Gardium.

-Long live the Empire!

-Long live Her Highness the Princess!

-Long live Artorius!

Everyone drunk on the news of the victory, showed off their joy.

“Hurray!”

I also shouted out a hurray, that’s when Eleris finally pulled on my arm.

“Your Highness! Restrain yourself!”

“Why? It’s pretty fun!”

“I can’t believe this…”

It was fun acting a bit immature.

Of course, when I thought about my actual mental age, deadly humiliation engulfed me internally.

* * *

There were certain things one could only find in the Imperial Capital.

One of them is the mana train.

So, a fantasy version of a train. They were implemented on a large scale by the Imperial Government, as they couldn't handle everyone's transportation needs with just warp gates, bridges and wagons inside the Capital.

They were eco-friendly trains, which were powered by this convenient item called mana stone, a staple of the medieval fantasy genre.

The comments I received about this were as followed:

Isn't that just ridiculous? Isn't that much too convenient?

I mean, I'm not the only one who wrote about things like these. Lol. I did it anyway lol.

If you could make a train, wouldn't you also be able to make a cellphone?

Dunno lol

Well, that train was actually moving right in front of my eyes now.

The city division was similar to Seoul's, and, the route map, of course, also aligned with the Seoul subway route map. We had to head south of the Bronzegate Bridge and to do that we headed towards the station to catch a mana train.

We first had to head to the station located in the Al Ligar district and take the train to Bronzegate.

Simply put, it went from Yongsan Station to the Express Terminal and then to Banpo Han River Park. It was so easy to convert. It would have been difficult for me to put

my head around this if I came up with some strange map. If I did that, I would have made my life as a writer harder, not that of the readers. I should be able to write comfortably!

I was so proud of my lazy former self. If I hadn't put in this convenient setting of mana stones, I would have had to take a carriage or walked there. That would have been pretty annoying. I didn't think of the places I put in the novel as these places, but as places in Seoul, that's how I'd be able to know exactly where they were.

In the moving train, Eleris murmured quietly engulfed her robes.

"Humans sure are incredible."

"What?"

"They know how to make things like this."

Were you actually praising me, because I made this basically, you know? Yeah, I'm pretty good. I can't believe I made this with just a few lines. Maybe I'm a god?

In fact, I might have been this world's god. A stupid one that died of high blood pressure after reading some malicious comments.

"How great would it have been if we created things like these with our excellent magical power instead of powerful destruction magic and war weapons."

Eleris murmured in a self-deprecating voice. Certainly, demons seemed to be superior to humans in terms of magic. However, the demons only used magic for destruction rather than for their daily lives.

Therefore, even with their awesome power, the Demon Realm looked rather dull, not prosperous at all. There wasn't really a city around the Demon King's Castle. It was just a huge fortress that stood alone.

However, there were a lot of people living in this human Capital.

She might have seen many magical tools that helped them in their everyday lives and magic being used in ways that were beneficial to humans.

Did Eleris constantly comparing the barren Demon Realm with this place, while

living here?

Maybe that was the reason why she felt that the Demon Realm was wrong and backwards.

So that was why she ended up hoping for the humans' victory and not the demons'.

I seemed to know what she as thinking to a certain extent.

A world where only weapons to kill enemies were made.

A world where people were struggling with all their might to make themselves happy.

Although Eleris rejoiced about the end of the war and the human's victory, she was just blankly staring at the joyful sights in front of her not being able to fully be happy about the fall of the Demon Realm.

No matter what kind of place one's home was, even if one didn't want to go back to it, it would always feel sad having lost one's place to return to.

* * *

The riverside of Irene was well-maintained. The green grass was trimmed well and there were people walking about the well-paved promenade.

For ordinary people who couldn't afford to travel far, the park built along the Irene River was the best picnic spot in the area.

"It's a place that always lifts my mood when I come here."

Eleris wore a soft smile on her lips despite the strong sunlight. Maybe because she liked the scenery. It certainly seemed like Eleris could tolerate sunlight better than I would have assumed.

"Yeah, it would be even better if this scenery wasn't right next to it."

"Oh… Yes…"

Woah… Waah…

– Guweeeeeeek!

– Hey, you bastard! Huh! That son of a bitch, are ya cheatin right now? How did so many 3s come out?! Huh?!

-Who's cheatin? I've been livin an honest life! If it's 3 then it's 3!

Below the Brozegate Bridge.

People don't even dare to go there.

Because of the shade the bridge threw, this place was a lot darker and gloomier than other places.

A group of beggars were drunk, vomiting, eating, drinking, playing dice and trembling all while the sun was still hanging high up in the sky. Some beggars approached some passers-bys if they got close enough to sell them candy.

"So the cockroaches infesting this peaceful landscape are our allies and main source of income?"

"Yes… That's right…"

Why were you feeling ashamed, when it's these guys who should?

I didn't even want to get close to them.

"Hey, young lady, buy some candy from me."

Then a beggar popped out from nowhere and crept towards us, shoving candy in our faces with his dirty hands. It looked like we were also their targets.

Eleris sighed and accepted the candy. She didn't really want to say no.

"Five bronze coins."

One gold coin was 1 million won and one silver coin was 10000 won.

A bronze coin was roughly 100 won.

That was how I roughly converted them. So 500 won for a candy of that size wasn't cheap. But was candy even that common in this world? Weren't you able to obtain carbohydrates anywhere in modern society?

However, there was a beggar selling candy. Anyway, let's just leave it at that. I'll lose, if I continue thinking about that.

Eleris seemed to be contemplating if she should give me that candy she bought for 5 bronze coins, maybe thinking I wouldn't eat it.

"It's too dirty for Your Highness to eat."

After agonizing about it, Eleris shook her head.

"I'm not so picky about these things."

"……"

I wasn't particularly craving candy, but I wasn't such a fussy eater. However, Eleris looked at me slightly surprised as if she didn't expect me to say something like that. No, that jerk attribute of that former prince was quite something.

Was that jerk born to be criticised or something?

Will I end up receiving praise like: "Even though you're breathing, why aren't you causing any trouble today?".

To begin with, the restraint placed on my being reborn as this jerk actually had some merit. If I were reincarnated into some rising star of the century with tremendous abilities, that would be a huge advantage, but if one didn't work hard even for a single day they will be questioned saying things like one changed in a bad way.

A bastard that gets complimented just by breathing vs. a genius that gets scolded just by breathing.

The former was overwhelmingly good. Being reincarnated into a person who had already been perceived as negative throughout the world would be great for pretending to be weak.

If I were the former prince would I have felt offended just by being approached by a

beggar?

“Then would you like to eat it?”

“Sure.”

I peeled the wrapper off of the candy I got from Eleris and put it in my mouth. It just tasted sweet with no flavor.

“Did I like sweets?”

“I remember you did.”

“Hmm.”

I don’t like sweets though.

However, it seemed like being young had its advantages. The beggar who approached us was approaching others now. Most of the time, it felt more like people wanted to get rid of the beggar than honestly wanting to buy these candies.

It was a disgusting sight, but I was told that that was how they funded their activities.

No, I still didn’t like looking at it.

CHAPTER 17

There was a good reason behind why we chose this place to meet up.

Count Pontheus had servants who had no idea that he was a demon, there were also influential people coming to his mansion, as he was a noble. Eleris' shop and it's second story were a little too small for the four of us.

The base of Irene's wild dog was a place avoided by all and swarming with beggars. I was told there were also quite the number of secret spaces. Eleris passed through the mess of beggars affected by hallucination magic. Even while we were passing right by the beggars they didn't notice our presence.

There was a dark tunnel right under the bridge. This place seemed to be their real base.

I was told that it originally served as a type of drainage channel that would lead the city's rain water to Irene when it rained. As this place wasn't really visited by people, it also served as Irene's Wild Dog's hide out when they turn into a Lycanthrope.

There were beggars lying around and sleeping inside. There were blankets, mops and roughly built shacks.

It really was a beggar colony.

As we went even deeper inside, eventually even the shacks disappeared from our sight. As we entered the endless sewers, we saw a small light in the distance.

Someone was sitting in front of a lit bonfire. Even though they were just the leader of some beggars, they still were a king in a way, however, they didn't seem like they had anything special around him.

They were just like a dog basking in the fire's warmth.

There was a person wearing a ripped shirt and tattered trousers, with thick gray hair on their head tied in random ways.

Irene's Wild Dog.

"You're here, my lord."

Come to think of it, I was never told that the dog was a man…

* * *

The King of Beggars.

Irene's Wild Dog.

The Leader of a Gang.

"Loyar greets His Highness the Prince."

She knelt down in front of me as soon as she saw me. That Wild Dog's real name was Loyar and as far as I knew she was a wolf-type Lycanthrope.

"…Yes, nice to see you. Although it's in a place like this."

We were inside Gardium, but here we were meeting up in the sewers.

"Is Sarkegaar still over there?"

Loyar nodded at Eleris' words.

"All the nobles must be busy. There's going to be a victory celebration and stuff. He'll be here soon, though. This is a lot more important to us."

Eleris was a pacifist, however she was still surprised that I was still alive, Loyar on the other hand didn't really have any big reaction. How should I put it, it felt like she didn't really care much about all this?

"Loyar, I'm telling you in advance, but he lost all his memories. Except for who he was… He doesn't remember almost anything."

At those words, Loyar stared at me.

"……For real?"

“Well, yeah…… It somehow turned out like that.”

“Hmm…”

Her gaze was a bit uncomfortable.

“I’m glad to hear that.”

“……You’re happy about that?”

“Yeah, because you’d tell me stuff like I should lie down with my stomach exposed, saying that dogs should behave like dogs.”

“……I, I did?”

“Yeah. You’d even put me on a leash sometimes.”

“Huh…”

Loyar opened her mouth as she thought about those times. Oh no, you’re telling me I treated Lycanthropes like some sorts of pets? Eleris’ mouth twitched as she was smiling half-heartedly.

“Lo, Loyar… As far as I can remember, you kind of liked that……”

“When did I ever?!”

Loyar’s face turned red. What the hell were you talking about? Did I really treat a Lycanthrope who changes into a wolf every full moon as a common dog?

Was she like my pet or something?

“Tha, that… I can’t really remember, but I’m sorry…”

“Well, it’s fine.”

Your expression didn’t look fine at all though. If I were in her shoes I would have really hated being treated like that.

Come to think of it, I was told she volunteered for this spy mission even though she

was a Lycanthrope.

Could it be she was forced to volunteer to get away from me? Come to think of it, that was pretty plausible. I managed to somehow escape and come here alive, but could I trust her?

“We, well… I can’t erase my past actions, but I’m… sorry. Let’s try to get along from now on.”

I reached out my hand to her, showing her that I meant no harm.

-Pat

“……”

“……”

I meant to shake her hand.

However, she just put her hand on mine. She didn’t grasp it; she just put her hand on top of mine.

“!”

As soon as she realized what she did, Loyar was startled and then lowered her hand to hold mine.

Wasn’t that……

Did she just do ‘Give paw’?

“Give paw.”

– Pat

The moment I put out my palm, Loyar put her hand on my hand. She did it without realizing it and immediately pulled it back.

“Y, your Highness… Why am I doing that?”

Loyar said so in cold sweat.

The speechless Eleris also added some words.

“It’s like the body is reacting on its own without the head telling it to.”

“O, oh, no!”

“Your Highness. How about you try telling her to lie down and show you her stomach?”

“Hey!”

“She going to flip over. Try it.”

“N, no! Why would I do that!”

I couldn’t get myself to do that in the end. She’d probably really do it.

Why was she trained so well?

How often did I bully you like this in the past? Rather, it was already on the level that her body reacted instinctively.

I’m afraid she’d really sit if I tell her to sit.

“Uhm, erm. Sorry, I’ll be more careful.”

“…Yes…”

Even though her heart doesn’t like me, her body was that of a loyal dog. Thinking that I put my worries about Loyar aside. I sat down besides the fire. When Sarkegaar arrived we could start talking about the details.

I felt something approaching from afar. There was a sound echoing through the sewers.

– Uooooooooaaaaah!

I couldn’t even see his face yet, but I was already convinced that he’ll be the

troublesome type.

Just like I expected.

When Sarkegaar arrived, he hugged me and began to wail loudly.

'*Oh my goodness! For those wretched humaaaans to kill His Majesty the Great Demon King! They must have used some cowardly tricks! What are we going to do about this? What are we to doooo? But seeing that Your Highness is still safe, there's still a ray of hope left for the people of the Demon Realm. What a miracle! Wooaaaah! Please quickly grow up and rebuild the Demon Realm stronger than it was before and erase all traces of these filthy human beiiiiiings!*'

.

.

He roughly kept on mumbling and crying loudly for about 10 minutes.

He started crying even louder when I told him that I had lost my memories. No, I thought I was some kind of super jerk? Why was he so sad?

Ah.

Seeing how he was acting right now, it seems like even the former prince, who was indeed a jerk, avoided him.

His voice was so loud that it made the entire sewer tremble. It was so loud that Eleris was forced to cast noise suppression magic around us.

"Kuhuk… Sniff… Buhuuhuk…"

Even I, who didn't think much about his crying before, was almost brought to tears. No, well, maybe I was the type that would start crying as well if I saw someone crying in front of me.

No, that's also not it. This guy was crying so sadly.

What's with this?

Anyway, Sarkegaar was a loyalist almost to the point of insanity.

Sarkegaar continued to sniffle for a while, making snorting noises. I felt like he was going to run out of breath, so I felt like I had to somehow comfort him.

“Why’s such a grown-up Fiend crying like that? Huh? It’s like you lost your country.”

Come to think of it, we really lost our country. Looks like that idiom became reality now.

Sakegaar looked up at me, at my words.

“I see! You’re right! Demons are still alive, so the Demon Realm has yet to die as well! What disloyalty I committed! The Demon Realm is still alive and well! Please punish meeeeeee!”

That guy twisted my words weirdly, making his own determination flare up even more.

Loyar and Eleris were looking at me as if they were trying to apologize for being helpless in this situation.

They seemed to be tired of Sarkegaar’s antics as well. After barely calming him down, we all sat down around the bonfire.

What a perfect meeting place for a prince and servants of a fallen kingdom. Sarkegaar was looking at me with a firm expression.

“You must rebuild the Demon Realm.”

Eleris stared at me. She seemed to want to remind me about our previous conversation about moderately playing along.

“Ah, uhm… Well. That’s right.”

“And to take revenge for the previous King, we have to build an even stronger and more powerful nation than ever before…!”

“Ah, you bastard! If you keep on sticking to these unfruitful rhetorics I’ll rip out your tongue!”

Loyar shouted.

Yes, even in novels, if a character keeps on talking about similar things, the author will get cursed out for inflating the length of the chapter. Sarkegaar also fake coughed as if preparing to continue on with the third verse.

“Ehem. My apologies, Your Highness. It’s just when I heard the news that His Majesty the Demon King had passed away, it seemed like the whole world was coming to an end…”

“Alright. I got it.”

It seemed like he was the type of person who’d finish what he wanted to say no matter what.

Hearing the news of the Demon Realm’s defeat must have felt like the sky was collapsing above him. However, since I was still alive, I was his last hope, hence reigniting his fighting spirit.

“Rebuilding the Demon Realm, huh. That’s good and all, but there are only the four of us and I’m still some useless, incompetent kid.”

“Calling yourself as such is an unfair thing to say! Your Highness’ bloodline is the most noble! You are the only Arcdemon left in this world!-”

“Yeah, so that’s it.”

I cut off Sarkegaar’s muffled words.

“Just what the hell is an Arcdemon?”

Just what was an Arcdemon, for them to not even think of finding a new Demon King and simply clung to me?

I had no idea about that yet.

Everyone was looking at me with puzzlement apparent on their faces.

CHAPTER 18

Eleris, who was shocked by me not even knowing what an Arcdemon was, started to explain briefly. Sarkegaar was about to open his mouth, but she told him to be silent because he surely would have just continued with his useless rethorics.

“Arcdemons are essential existences in order to create a society consisting of most of the tribes, often referred to as demons.”

“Society?”

“Yes.”

The Arcdemons’ unique ability. I confirmed that I had this ability to rule over demons. I remember it saying that it was at Rank D.

“Originally, demons couldn’t exist as a large society. You know that Loyar is a Lyanthrope, I’m a Vampire and Sarkegaar is a Dreadfiend, right?”

“That’s right.”

“Before the emergence of the Arcdemon race, many tribes of demons were at odds with each other as well as humans. On the western side of the continent there were large human nations, but on the eastern there was the Demon Realm called Darklands. In other words, there were various demons living in small groups in that place.”

Even if there were no humans around them, the demons would just live by fighting each other.

“The Darklands were a land drenched in eternal war, so humans had no reason to care about us.”

The humans were prospering, while the demons just kept on fighting and would self-destruct before long. Numerous races lived in that place, but with these ongoing battles, reaching any kind of prosperity was impossible and the population of each race was just too different.

“However, there was someone who showed up to mediate all the conflicts and battles between the tribes and showed them how to live together and integrated them into a society. They had a strange power to interfere with the demons’ spirit.”

“Was that the Demon King?”

“Yes, he was the first Demon King Arcdemon.”

It wasn’t known where he came from or what he was exactly. However, he was able to control the demons’ spirit, allowing them to live together, which was impossible before.

Out of respect, the demons called him Arcdemon. Eventually, this term got used to describe the Demon King’s race.

Sarkegaar added.

“Under the influence of the Arcdemon, the demons were able to unite as one society under one leader. Its influence is still intact, but if several generations without an Arcdemon pass, the demons would be divided again and return to the era of eternal war. Back into the dark ages.”

The Demon Realm would completely collapse if Arcdemons were to disappear.

If so, that meant that there were still many remaining Demons that were able to get along with each other, however if this continued over generations, the Demons would go back to the time where they fought and killed each other over and over.

I understood now why no one had the ambition to become the next Demon King.

Unless they were an Arcdemon, there was no other race capable of performing the job of Demon King in the first place.

I was now able to understand that Sarkegaar’s loyalty was no longer just loyalty.

Sarkegaar believed that the existence of the Demon King was essential in order to maintain the foundation of the Demon Realm’s society. This was completely different from just simple loyalty to one’s country.

The Demon King acted as an emulsifier between water and oil.

A being that made things that weren't able to mix together, mix together.

"…Then there's one more question I have."

"Yes. go ahead."

"Why did the Demon World War happen?"

I just wrote down that there was a war, but not why the Demon World War happened. Humans tried to vanquish the demons. that's what I wrote. So this was supposed to be the first invasion from the human's side.

Eleris looked into the bonfire, saying:

"The humans have always been afraid of the unification of the Demon Realm."

The probability of the event that I hadn't properly set had been fixed. It was quite bizarre to experience my messed up probabilities getting fixed like that.

Humans had invaded the Demon Realm.

Since I didn't state the reason for it, the world supplemented the possibility that humans feared the Demon Realm's unification and the setting of the Arcdemons. I had that strange feeling of guilt creep up inside of me, as this felt like someone else filled the holes I created while messing around.

The demons of the Darkland began to form a society. Even the humans, who had been fighting among themselves had no choice but to be alert of that situation.

"The previous Demon Kings were aware of the fact that the humans would one day start to invade the Demon Realm. That's why the Demon Realm was continuously preparing for war."

I nodded at Eleris words. Even if they don't intend to invade each other, if they see the other side increase their arms the other side would do the same.

'Don't get us wrong, we were just increasing our military to defend against a possible attack from you.'

Of course, no one would believe that bullshit.

It was common for fights to happen because they feared each other.

So, even though the Demon Realm and the Human Realm didn't have any intentions of attacking each other, they were preparing to attack each other, just because the other side existed.

It didn't matter who started it. A war would eventually break out no matter what.

The Demon Realm had the Demon King, but the Human Realm also had mighty forces, the Warriors. The warriors succeeded in taking down the Demon King with them.

The death of the Demon King was on a completely different level than the death of a human king. So, the mere fact that the Demon King was dead would have completely destroyed the morale of many of the King's soldiers.

In fact, the Demon King was comparable to a God in the Demon Realm.

This explanation alone was enough for me to understand the importance of Arcdemons.

"Yes… I can see now why Arcdemons are important."

Now I knew why it had to be me.

"Then what should I do from now on? Have you thought about that yet?"

"You have to build your strength. Also, Gardium is much too dangerous. We have to return to the Demon Realm, gather the scattered demons and reestablish your power, while you must continue your training."

Of course, if I returned to the Demon Realm, I would be welcomed by the demons who still remembered the Demon King, and it wouldn't be so difficult to gather some forces.

The Darklands were vast, and even if the Demon King died, it was impossible for the humans to devour everything. I shook my head at Sarkegaar's words.

"Too dangerous. The humans can't occupy all of the Darklands, but they wouldn't neglect their surveillance. If a new demonic force were to emerge, they would

immediately launch another attack."

They wouldn't just calmly sit by as we reconstruct the Demon Realm they just destroyed. If they noticed any sign of suspicious behavior, they would make a game of killing us all off.

And above all, I just said that to go along with their words, because I had no intentions of rebuilding the Demon Realm and going to war again, you know? I was told that the demons would split up again without me, but, to be honest, that would happen in the distant future. It wasn't like it was happening now.

And… There was another point that wasn't as important.

"I think going back to the Demon Realm would be a bad idea."

Sarkegaar's eyes lit up at my words, as if he just got an idea. I didn't want to go back to the Demon Realm in the first place. I sure didn't like it there.

I wanted to stay in Gardium for now. The city was pretty nice.

I didn't want to live in a place without trains!

"This is the heart of the enemy territory. To defeat the enemy, one must know the enemy. Rather, we need to learn the ways of humans here."

It wasn't hard for me to come up with some reason, as I was the master of finding excuses.

"Ooh, you're definitely the ideal prince. That boldness and courage to strike right at the enemy's heart! A King's virtue worthy of imitatiooooon!"

No, I just wanted to live close to the station, you know?

There was also Eleris, so there shouldn't be chance of being discovered by humans while living here. The probability of getting caught should have been significantly lowered.

There was no reason for me to leave Gardium. This was the best city to live in on the entire continent, and I didn't want to leave even if I were to die, unless there was a chance that I would be discovered to be a demon.

I just wanted to while away my time here until the ending. It wasn't good for me to mess with the story any more, and the ending would come closer and closer as the years passed by while being cared for by Eleris.

There weren't any specific conditions that I had to be active, right? Right?

Did my excuses work too well? He almost cried at my kind of plausible excuse, believing that I would really be able to defeat our enemy by learning their ways.

He seemed to admire my boldness and courage.

"Your Highness. If that's what you've been thinking, then I have an even better idea."

"…A better idea?"

No, I don't know what it is, but I'm 100% sure it wouldn't be any good for me.

"Only by knowing the humans' way would we be able to bring them down! I admire your wisdom!"

No.

What are you going to say?

"By entering 'Temple' you would be able to thoroughly learn the humans' ways! Defeating them with their own weapons would only be true revenge!""

Oh.

What's that nonsense?

Loyar nodded her head at Sarkegaar's words.

"I don't think that's such a bad idea."

"Hu, huh?"

"The Temple is the cradle of not only the Empire's, but also almost all of the human race's children. When you grow up, you'd know all the people who hold important positions in human society. If you were to fight the Empire, you'd know better than

anyone else who your enemies are and their way of thinking. Or you might be able to subdue them. You would destroy the Empire from within."

No, wait.

What?

I had no intentions of interfering with the main story. However, Loyar looked at Sarkegaar seemingly agreeing with him as if what he said was something good for once.

Sarkegaar added.

"Additionally, Temple is currently nurturing young talents with great power. They aim to nurture talents like the Warrior Artorius. I'm certain it would be of great help to us, knowing what sprouts they are raising and we might be able to remove the too dangerous talents at their roots before they grow."

Yes. Temple was also an institution that nurtured talented people who would eventually become powerful forces. Even in that kind of place, there was a type of special calss that nurtured talented people who could succeed the Hero Artorius and his party, and yes, that was where the main characters were.

However, there was no reason for me to go there. What the hell was I supposed to do there?

I was going crazy.

I started to get shoved into the story just because I said the wrong words.

Eleris!

Help me!

You don't want me to turn into a war weapon, right?!

Eleris just smiled at me when she noticed me looking at her with pleading eyes.

"I also think that that's a good idea, Your Highness."

What was she on about? Wouldn't she normally disagree? It was hard to understand why Eleris, who should be opposed to Sarkegaar's ideas, agreed.

"Now, just wait a second…"

I tried hard to come up with an excuse to avoid this strange development all three agreed to.

"No matter how much we can hide our appearances with magic, there will probably be wizards at Temple, don't you know what would happen then? It would definitely be dangerous if my identity got revealed."

Did these idiots want to kill me?

"Don't worry, Your Highness."

With a smile Sarkegaar took off a ring from his finger.

"This is a ring that gets passed down from generation to generation in my clan."

"Well, what about it?"

"Just by wearing this ring, you'd be able to use my clan's power."

What?

Why would you have such a thing? Why would such a thing appear so conveniently at a time like this? Huh? This was so unbelievable, honestly. Why the hell would these polymorphic bastards pass down a ring capable of granting the ability to polymorph from generation to generation?

That would be completely useless to them!

Wasn't this just some random setup for this moment?!

[Do you find it weird to find such an improbable development happening in this novel suddenly?]

[Idiot.]

I felt like something just went by my vision. I didn't see it properly.

What was that?

"That, that, how could I accept such an important ring that got passed down for such a long time? It, uh, must be very precious to you. Like a memento of your parents. Isn't that right?"

I gradually ran out of excuses.

"Just what are mementos in the face of your great mission of rebuilding the Demon Realm! Please take it, Your Highness!"

Sarkegaar pushed the ring towards me while shouting out his determination.

"A strong and prosperous nation is almost in our graaaaasp!"

I fell victim to my own excuses.

Anyway, it was pretty obvious.

That person who sent me here didn't seem to want me to calmly get to the end.

CHAPTER 19

The plan of my admission to Temple had been decided.

Yes, obviously, I absolutely wouldn't get caught with that ring on. This wasn't on the level of illusion magic, this completely reconstructed my body.

I wondered since Polymorph could reconstruct one's physical body, woudn't it be possible to improve one's physical specs as well?

If I were to change my body to look like someone who'd have 99 points in strength, wouldn't I get stronger as well?

When I asked this, Loyar told me, strangely seriously:

"……Polymorph of that level would only be possible for someone with the same amount of mana a dragon would have."

"Aren't Arcdemons kind of like dragons?"

"Dragons are illusory monsters. Could there ever be a being in this world which could use magic without even properly casting?"

What a sad excuse of a legend.

I didn't believe in legends, they were on the same level as lies.

"What you're using isn't actually Polymorph. This is just the version our clan makes use of, so you must get stronger yourself. Strength obtained through transformation, wouldn't be your own strength. You should not rely on such cheap tricks."

I'm oh so glad that you confirmed that I wouldn't be able to use such a cheat ever. Anyway, because I gained the ability of the Dreadfiend clan, I was able to completely transform, not only disguise myself.

"By the way, I have a question."

Of course, I knew that making myself look muscular by using polymorph wouldn't really make me muscular.

"For example, is there a limit to how dense I could make my hair?"

"Yes? What do you mean?"

Sarkegaar didn't seem to understand what I was talking about.

However, I was serious.

"Let's say I've got hair loss, could I just transform myself into a from with a full head of hair? Well, that's what I was talking about."

"Isn't that a matter of course? That's not such a big deal."

Ah.

"Sarkegaar! You're history's greatest loyalist. Of course! Of course!"

You're such a nice guy.

I couldn't hold in my passion and hugged him.

I held the Eternal Anti Hair Loss Ring in my hands!

"If you wish I shall even give you my liiiiiife!"

Loyar and Eleris stared bankly as Sarkegaar and I hugged fiercely.

* * *

Gardias Temple.

The main stage of the original story.

Frankly, there was no reason not to go there. As Sarkegaar helped me concealing my identity, I'd be fine. Even if I didn't intervene, the story would just proceed on its own, going straight for the set ending.

In other words, the less involved I was, the better.

However, just by intervening slightly, variables would appear. The story already changed a lot because Charlotte de Gardias survived.

I didn't want to get too involved in a story that already had a predetermined ending.

Also.

There really was no need for me to go to school with all these kids. So why did I have to do it?

However, once Sarkegaar would find out that I had no intentions of rebuilding the Demon Realm, I didn't know what he'd do. As for Loyar, I wasn't so sure what she was thinking, but Sarkegaar definitely was loyalist, but in the end, he probably was the most dangerous person to me.

In the end, Sarkegaar seemed to want me to grow stronger.

Frankly speaking, I was neither suited for fighting nor was it my hobby. Just like everyone doesn't want to suffer pain, I felt like I wanted to escape to a place where my survival and well-being were guaranteed.

However, in the end, whether or not I went to Temple, I had to somehow get stronger myself.

In order to someday be able to escape Sarkegaar's clutches, I needed to have a certain amount of strength. It didn't matter if I was standing on Eleris' side or Sarkegaar's side.

I would have to enter the Gardias Temple.

"But how?"

"If I took you as my adopted son, you would be able to enter Temple."

Using the position of Count Pontheus, he could take me in as his adopted son, enabling me to enter Temple like that.

I'd also become the son of a noble, so would I be able to live a more comfortable life

then?

“That’s too dangerous.”

However, Eleris shook her head. As if not understanding, Sarkegaar frowned.

“What are you saying, Eleris?”

“Sarkegaar, you were the one who personally kidnapped the princess. Now that she has returned, they will restart the investigation of how the princess’ abduction was carried out. They have the princess as witness after all. There’s a chance that they’ll catch your tail.”

“I left no traces.”

“Think of it as just a precaution.”

“……I see.”

A second investigation into the princess’ abduction could draw suspicion to Sarkegaar. It was really just a precaution, but Eleris seemed to think that there was no need to take useless risks.

That was how I thought it was.

“Then, as expected, Eleris would be best to be my guardian……?”

“No, Your Highness.”

“……Huh?”

I thought she’d obviously take on that role, but Eleris just shook her head.

“I am a Vampire. If it’s discovered that I’m a vampire, I’m sure Your Highness of whom I was taking care of would also fall under suspicion. I’m always careful with everything I do, but we don’t know what’ll happen.”

Although Eleris was well integrated into human society, she always kept the possibility of being discovered to be a vampire in mind.

“What? How could I get into Temple if neither Sarkegaar nor Eleris are able to be my guardians?”

“Why can’t you?”

Eleris pointed at the last person present as if it was obvious.

“…What? Me?”

“What?”

You want the beggar king to be my guardian?

What the hell was this nonsense? Both I and Loyar were dumbfounded, but Eleris shook her head.

“I’m just telling you, but it would be most beneficial for you to just be born as an orphan.”

I understood what she meant.

“If you were adopted by Sarkegaar, you might be in danger if his deeds were discovered, and if you were to choose me as your guardian, you might be in danger if my true identity were discovered.”

“…I know what you mean, even if I’m caught, my gang members don’t know that I’m a Lycanthrope, so he could just say that he didn’t know. That’s it, right?”

“Yeah.”

The members of Loyar’s pack didn’t know that she was a Lycanthrope. So even if Loyar were to be discovered, even if they were questioned most of them wouldn’t know a thing. There were a lot of members after all.

In addition, there was a high possibility that I would not be connected to my collaborators even if they were discovered if I entered Temple as an orphan with no ties.

Yeah, Eleris was right.

"……So, you want me to live here from now on?"

"I can't believe Your Highness has to live in such a filthy place! That's just unreasonableeeeeeee!"

"Did you just call my place flithy? Are ya trying to insult me?"

A fire blazed in Loyar's eyes.

"Ya want to let me know how it feels like to buy some bread from your own money starting today? Huh?"

"N, no. I, I , I didn't mean it like that…… The, there's just a bit of… You know? I mean, see……"

"Ain't that a little too much, huh? Hey, if I'm gonna sponsor such a great VIP, d'ya have any idea what the fuck my kids are supposed to do?"

Loyar was their financier.

So, she actually had the greatest say here.

Loyar threatened Sarkegaar with overwhelming force, and Sarkegaar's face turned completely blue as soon as he heard that she would stop giving him money.

Eleris sighed watching those two fight.

"You don't have to live here. If you enter Temple, you'll be able to live in the dormitories. You just need to spend a few days here."

She gave me a kind of look that seemed to say: "How could I let you live in such a dirty place?".

Well, I didn't really mean to become something as grandiose as a noble's son, but…

When I went to school, won't the other kids make fun of me for being a beggar? Mentally I was over 30, but no matter how old I'm on the inside…

No, I was just saying if these little punks find out that I made my living by begging at my age, won't they hit me or something?

"……"

Still, I couldn't come up with a safer idea than Eleris' suggestion.

Just a few days, a few days…

I have to live a few days in this place…

When I asked her if I had to stay a few days here, Eleris told me that I had to.

I was an orphan and didn't even have a proper identity. It seemed that in order to obtain a new identity, I had to somehow prove that I'm an orphan, and to prove that, I had to get the testimony of Loyar's group.

I couldn't believe I had to acquire a new identity through the beggars' guarantees. What's with this?

"There are many of my little brothers who don't really exist on paper, so I know what to do, because some of the guys do end up needing an ID."

It was natural for her to call them little brothers as she's the head of this organization, so to speak, but it still was strange hearing it come out of her mouth.

I couldn't believe a Lycanthrope being brothers with humans. Was this a live-action version of Tiger Brother? So would this Wild Dog also become my brother? No, rather my sister.

Sarkegaar's words angered Loyar, but she seemed to think that staying in this environment for a long time would be a bad thing for me as well.

"Eleris will come up with the right excuse, so we can just do it like that."

Loyar seemed carefree. Eleris contemplated how she should get me out of here as soon as possible and admit me to Temple.

* * *

Sarkegaar and Eleris went back, leaving me and Loyar behind. I had already been told what to do. Loyar told me not to worry as no one would touch me anyway, but that wasn't really the problem…

There’s nothing that can be solved easily.

I don’t really want to go to Temple, but now I had to go while wearing an identity given to me by a beggars’ group. This made me want to go even less. But what could I do? This was the safest way.

Loyar dragged me out of the deep parts of the sewers and took me to the shantytown.

-Whistle!

As Loyar whistled, all the beggars that were scattered all over the place slowly started to gather in one place. Everyone was limping, but they seemed to listen well.

This must’ve been the dark side of Gardium.

“Big sis, what’s with that kid?”

If it were Eleris or Sarkegaar they would have been furious at his words, but Loyar didn’t show much of a reaction. She wasn’t loyal in mind, but very loyal in body. She was that kind of bizarre being.

“He’s a new member. He’s called Reinhardt.”

This was a new name, not my real name which was Valier.

Reinhardt.

No, I mean Valier wasn’t actually my real name either, right?

Anyway, it was an alias, an alias. Nothing more.

Sarkegaar suggested it.

He told me I should choose another name, not Valier, as my alias, so he asked me for my opinion.

Ooh.

I had some in mind.

‘Gromm Hellscream.’

‘…… Hellscream? Isn’t that name just too creepy?’

The first suggestion got cut down by Eleris.

‚Then Lich King?‘

‘What perfection! What a fitting name for a great Demon Kiiiiiiiiiiiiing! If it’s Your Highness, you would certainly far surpass the magical capabilities of a lich!’

‘Your Highness, your real name would be much more inconspicuous compared to that.‘

Sarkegaar agreed to it, but Loyar refused. She said something like: “if you’ll choose such an ugly name, you’d be better off just using your real name.”.

Well this name was the equivalent of Kim Eum Doom in Korean.

‘Then Thrall.’

‘…… Your Highness, we can’t possible use a weird joke like that.’

Eleris quite seriously thought Thrall was a pun on ‘Damn it’. (T/N: Korean writing for Thrall =ssral, Damn it = jae gi ral or also written as X-ral (ekssral)

Don’t you know the Warcraft series?!

Eventually, after arguing for a long time, we were able to decide on something.

‘How about Reinhardt?’

‘…… Oddly enough, it’s a very main character-like name, but…… ’

‘I think it’s a better name than Hellscream.’

‘It wouldn’t hurt to add a few more syllables. A King’s name can’t be too simple… ’

‘If it’s even longer than that it would be a pain to say. I also don’t want to be mistaken as a noble or something.’

That's how it got decided. It wasn't particularly flashy, nor was it something weird. It was just a name.

CHAPTER 20

At Loyar's announcement, a sloppy but strong looking guy, who probably was the second-in-command here, chimed in.

"Big sis, where should we put 'im?"

"Oh, don't make him do anything."

Loyar shook her head.

"I'm gonna sent him to Temple."

At those words, the beggars made rather strange expressions.

"Did ya eat something wrong?"

"Huh?"

One of the beggars who said something along those lines slightly shrank back, when Loyar raised one of her eyebrows as if they were talking bullshit.

"No, why didja suddenly accept dis kid when you stubbornly refused to let any in before, cause they dun even know anythin? And Temple?"

There certainly weren't any children my age in Loyar's beggar group. Teenagers who derailed and ran away from home definitely were as hard to control as rabid dogs. So, it was quite natural that they asked something like that. Loyar shook her head.

"This guy's our future."

It felt weird suddenly becoming a bunch of beggars' future.

Maybe I've actually become the future of these guys to a certain extent.

Everyone's expressions showed more and more confusion. Loyar looked at the beggars, who were thoroughly dumbfounded and placed her hands on her hips.

The King of Beggars began her speech.

“As y’all know, we have nothing and we don’t know anything. Ain’t that right? Some of ya keep talking about the good old times where y’all were great, but look at ya now? Left to rot in some gutter. That’s why we got together like this. So that the ones who don’t exist can also live their lives.”

“But how long d’ya plan to live like that? I don’t care if it just were me, but you guys don’t want to live like this, right? Ya want to get out of this life, right?”

“But, it’s too late for us to learn anything new. So through our power… Our, money. Yes, using our capital, we will nurture talented people who’d be responsible for this gang’s future.”

Thinking what she said was quite plausible, Loyar seemed content. Somehow, this is the first time I’ve witnessed such charisma in any of my lives.

I instructed Loyar to briefly explain this as a strategy to nurture talent for the future of the gang and to first heavily focus their capital into one talent with the goal of optimizing the situation of all the beggars here.

One of the beggars titlted their head at Loyar’s proud declaration.

“Big sis, I dun think sending some guys to Temple would suddenly make us sleep on feather cushions, though?”

A valid concern.

Of course, Eleris and I came up with a lot of excuses to deal with this situation.

“If I say it’s like that, then it is like that. You bastards!”

However, Loyar just shouted at them, not tolerating any protests.

“If that’s what the boss said.”

“I guess you’re right.”

And everyone accepted that one sentence rather than millions of excuses.

That was a boss for you.

However, would it be worse to be found out to be a demon or the heir of a beggar organization?

Aren't they both pretty dog-like existences?

* * *

Strictly speaking, Loyar's words weren't just cheap excuses. Everyone was just convinced by the feeling that whatever Loyar told them, they had to do. It was that kind of attitude. Perhaps, this wasn't the first time that Loyar made them do something absurd.

Loyar took me to a rather big shack, and brought someone else with her.

A man of strong stature. He was the one who looked like the second-in-command from earlier. Loyar introduced me to this man.

Since Loyar was the boss around here, he promised me to treat me comfortably.

"Say hi to each other. This is our gang's future. Reinhardt. Reinhardt, this is my most trusted younger brother, so you can trust him, too. His name is Daibun."

"Nice to meet you, Reinhardt, I'm Daibun."

He was the younger brother favored by a Lycanthrope.

Was this a friendship that transcended race? It wasn't even 1%, it was friendship with a few decimal places between them. (T/N: as in their positions)

"I'm Reinhardt."

I shook hands with him. His hand was as large as a pot lid. Rather than a beggar, he looked more like a retired soldier in a slightly shabby outfit. He gave of a rugged impression.

Perhaps because he trusted Loyar just that much, but he didn't question or ask anything about this stranger that appeared out of nowhere she suddenly offered to send to Temple.

“Take ‘im to get an ID tomorrow. If you got time, swing by Temple.”

“Yes, big sis.”

The three of us just sat around for now. It was messy, but it was worlds apart from that hallway inside the Demon King’s Castle littered with corpses. This place was only dirty, so this was a literal heaven compared to that.

I thought about the worst case scenario and affirmed my present situation. Although it was a bit uncomfortable, it could be worse. Then Daibun spoke up hesitantly as he looked at Loyar.

“Big sis, what are you gonna do about the tuition? I’m not really sure, but ain’t Temple for noble children? I heard it costs a lot of money.”

It was a problem we were already aware of. We made the decision I’d go, but didn’t even have a way to solve the most important problem. It wasn’t about getting detected, but getting enough money.

For that reason, there were doubts whether it would be possible for Loyar to continue paying tuition for Temple.

The Gardias Temple was the most famous educational institution on the continent. Not only members of the Empire but also members of leading families from all over the continent often came to study abroad there.

Because of that the tuition was extremely high. The Temple itself was an educational institute, but it was also the place that gave the Empire the most revenue. Just by getting admitted to Temple one would be able to build connections with a lot of influential people. Nobles didn’t hesitate to pay a lot of money just to send their children to Temple.

However, it was doubtful that this beggars’ organization could admit me to Temple and continue to support me by paying that sinfully high tuition fee. I already had a contingency plan though.

Temple’s tuition fee varied depending on the grade and major, however, ordinary students required to pay 50 gold per semester. About 50 million won. That was equivalent to 100 million a year. In addition, tuition wildly varied depending on the major.

‘First of all, you only have to provide the tuition fee for a certain period of time.’

‘Are you thinking of going for a scholarship?’

Of course, I probably was smarter than the average kid, but honestly, there were definitely plenty of kids smarter than me in that place.

However, that wasn’t what was important.

‘The Empire wants a second and third Artorius. So what if one definitely had the talent, but didn’t have the money to get an education at Temple? In that case, the tuition will be waived!’

It sounded like I was guessing, but that’s what would happen. Students with outstanding talents, but with limited financial power, were specially managed within Temple. Of course, they wouldn’t make you pay the huge amount of tuition fees.

I was an Arcdemon. There should be something I could do.

‘Once I enter the school and get some education, I should be able to find something I’m talented in.’

After that tuition would be waived. This isn’t just nonsense as well, because I could make a talent bloom with my achievement points. It might not be possible at the moment, but there were plenty of ways to get achievement points if I started sticking close to the main story.

Everyone nodded to this as if it was quite plausible.

Before I was forced to go to Temple, I did say that I wanted to live a comfortable life, but if I had to go anyway, any thoughts about that went right out of the window. I had to become stronger, whether I liked it or not.

So, it was important to gather enough money to attend the first semester. From that point on, I’d get woven inside the main story, collect achievement points and develop my talents.

That was my goal now.

“Can we even do that with our earnings?”

“I don’t really know, but…… probably not.”

Loyar wasn’t particularly sharp.

Daibun hesitated before he opened his mouth.

“Well, how ‘bout if we cut down on what big sis is taking from the gang’s finances……?”

The money Sarkegaar spend on his aristocratic life. Perhaps Loyar didn’t disclose what she used the money she was taking away for. If we do as Daibun said we’d be able to save up enough money for me to go to Temple.

However, Loyar firmly shook her head.

“Didn’t I say I had to use it to prevent crap from happening?”

“Yes… You did.”

Loyar seemed to have told them that she uses the money to bribe the guards, explaining why her gang wasn’t cracked down on even though they were the way they were. Of course, I didn’t know if she really did that or not.

Well, Sarkegaar was a noble after all. He probably used his power to prevent this side from getting affected by anything. Either way, neither Loyar nor I could give up the support given to Sarkegaar.

Daibun sighed.

“These days our revenue is decreasing. Big sis, no one is getting close to Bronzegate Bridge anymore.”

There were rumors spreading that this place housed solicitors. For a long time now, people in the know didn’t come close to this place. As such, the revenue was gradually decreasing. That was only natural.

“This is a serious problem…”

It seemed like Loyar only realized at that moment that things weren’t going as planned. Then she glanced at me, as if telling me to do something.

Yes, I was waiting for my turn to speak.

“Uhm… How about we think about this a bit differently?”

“Huh? Differently?”

Daibun furrowed his brows as if what I said was strange.

No, these people just didn’t have enough sense to improve themselves. The answer was actually quite simple.

“If the customers are avoiding us, we just have find them ourselves.”

That was only natural. If one didn’t have customers, one had to find some. I got quite restless seeing that they didn’t even try to leave this place. It seemed like they were running around this area trying to sell their candy to people passing by. If one market was blocked, one should just open a new one.

Who’d help you if you just stayed on the ground saying you’re screwed?

“Find them? Do you mean to expand our power to other regions?”

“That’s right.”

“Do you have something in mind?”

“If you’ll sent them too far away, the kids might get exhausted too quickly.”

Daibun seemed to think it would be difficult to realize because they had to walk long distances to expand our power.

“No, this’ll make things more comfortable.”

“Comfortable…?”

“Yes, they’d just have to go to one place. It’s a place with a lot of people coming and going with a huge flow of people, you know?”

As if wondering where such a dream-like place was located, Loyar and Daibun looked at me with dumbfounded expressions on their faces.

“The Mana Train.”

That place had the largest flow of people in the whole capital.

They’d evolve from simple solicitors to subway vendors.

Both Daibun and Loyar were astonished by my idea that could be called revolutionary.

That was it.

That was how things should be done.

CHAPTER 21

Daibun continued to admire me, saying that he didn't know how he couldn't think of selling things in a place like that, and Loyar also seemed to think that that would be a good idea.

I've only been on that train once, but it didn't seem like there were any guards positioned on it yet. There might be complaints against the vendors getting filed, resulting in countermeasures, but that would be in the distant future.

It didn't end there.

This was my cash cow. Of course, things had to work out here. They had to earn a lot more and be more stable than they had ever been before.

In fact, it was difficult for me to believe that either Eleris or Sarkegaar would bring in any income.

Hence, this place was my lifeline.

"Of course, just selling candy alone like before would be a little weak. So we have to have something that would draw in everyone's attention."

"Attention?"

A place where a large amount of people gathered was overflowing with consumers. Of course, candy alone wouldn't garner much attention. It had to be a product that was specifically targeted at our customers.

"However, our financial situation isn't good enough to sell the good stuff, you know?"

"Right…"

Of course, it would have been nice if we could sell good quality stuff that people needed, but if that were possible for us, we'd just start an official business. Simply put, something simple, inexpensive that attracted a lot of attention, something that focused on utility rather than quality.

“Toys would be the best thing to sell in our situation I believe.”

“Toys? I don’t know what stuff they’re selling elsewhere, but d’ya think they’ll sell?”

Loyar seemed a bit hesitant.

I chuckled.

“Toys are products who are demanded by a different comsumer group than the actual purchasers.”

“……Huh?”

“What do you mean?”

Daibun would probably understand, but Loyar wasn’t the sharpest. Well, yeah, this was optimized for isekai characters. Not bad.

An Isekai cliche.

Talking about completely normal everyday things as if they were amazing in front of stupid characters.

Depending on the level of the things the writer makes the main character say one could tell the writer’s knowledge level.

Something along the lines of: “Aah, this is soap. Because of the surfactant in it you can wash your hands really well”

There’s a 100% chance that you’ll feel great about yourself for using the word ‘surfactant’ and about 98.235% of people will think you’re one smart cookie.

Anyway.

This time I was talking about toys.

“It’s the kids who will be begging for toys, but it’s the parents who have to pay for them.”

Toys were something kids demanded, but the actual purchase happened through the

parents.

“Let’s say a toddler were to cry for that toy on a crowded mana train.”

They were both staring at me talking.

“Then the parents would buy that toy, whether it was poor quality or not.”

I didn’t know how I should explain knowing this even though I lost my memory, but I was sure they’ll hear me out.

If they keep suspecting me, I didn’t think it would be such a bad idea to tell them the truth. I could even tell them I was a writer, however that would probably sound like nonsense to them.

I had no intention of acting careless purposefully though.

Anyway.

Loyar and Daibun were looking at me almost as if I was some kind of devil’s spawn-

Well, wasn’t I kind of one?

“You’re terrible…!”

Without realizing it, Loyar’s true intentions slipped out of her mouth. I was surprised myself.

Even if you treat me comfortably because I’m a kid. Huh? You want me to be good? Huh? Didn’t you say we should live comfortably together?

I was getting a little mad.

“Come on! Let’s do our best!”

I reached out my palm.

-Pat!

Loyar, of course, gave me her ‘paw’ out of reflex. Her face was completely blank.

Conclusion.

I didn't have any more plausible bullshit but toys in stock.

* * *

There were many other conditions I added. For starters they needed some neat clothes and a sales book to keep track of the articles they sold. Like that they wouldn't be shunned at least. They would at first do it like they did so far, but I've been trying to urge them to become more customer-friendly in the future.

We also had to think about our products, though.

Daibun was very impressed with the measures I had taken. He told me that he now understood why his big sis wanted to send me to Temple. He even generously praised me, saying that I'd deserve being their gang's brain. He even mentioned that it would be great if I received advanced education there.

With just a few words his attitude changed as if he just received a thousand dollars instead of having to pay off a debt of a thousand dollars.

I joined amidst the group to get to know them a bit better at least. To be honest, it felt pretty uncomfortable, but I couldn't avoid them anyway. It seemed like Loyar usually doesn't do anything but sleep.

She apparently did make an appearance when it was time to punch someone.

"I heard that Daibun praised that guy."

Although Loyar acted as the boss, it seemed like it was actually Daibun's role to manage the organization. Loyar said she'd send me to Temple, and Daibun didn't hold back with his complements, claiming that I wasn't an ordinary person, so the other members seemed to be looking upon me quite favorably, albeit still a bit skeptical.

"Hey, have a drink."

They offered alcohol to me without hesitation. Although one could see I was a minor at first glance, it seemed like they didn't care about that.

“Hey, all of this.”

I, who was in my thirties, also wanted to have a taste, but I was rather surprised.

“Hey! What’re ya givin alcohol to some kid?!”

There were some who said things like that, but I just giggled slightly and downed the drink in one go, before they could dissuade me.

“Woah, awsome.”

Everyone burst into laughter seeing me do this.

It’s a little bitter, but who cares.

Alcohol is alcohol and water is water. So it wouldn’t matter anyway.

The old man who poured me the drink chuckled. His breath didn’t smell that good, but it didn’t really matter.

“That young and already knows how to drink! Hah!”

“Is there a life without alcohol?”

“Well said!”

“This is it! Oh, we can become great friends!”

“I’ve been getting drunk ever since I was your age, now look at me! Hahaha!”

“Then let’s get drunk again today! Let’s goooooo! Let’ssss gooooo!”

“Let’s driiiink!”

“Here we goooooo!”

Without them I probably wouldn’t be able to live, so I couldn’t be picky and ungrateful.

I drank vigorously with the beggars until far into the night. Surprisingly, these gents

knew how to drink the right way. No, well, I actually was an old man, so of course I couldn't help but match these old men's pace.

They asked me this and that, and I wasn't that drunk, so I answered them as I planned.

"But how didcha get here?"

"I don't even remember anymore when I was abandoned. I was just drifting from place to place."

Too young to remember when I was abandoned, Loyar found me while I was wandering around the streets, so she took me in.

My origins were unknown. Everyone patted me on the shoulder saying that I must have had a hard time while still being so young. I was also told that I should go to Temple and become a great man.

"Don't be like us." They said. They gave me some advice that almost brought me to tears.

"By the way, what's the name of this gang…?"

It seemed that Loyar was called by the nickname Irene's Wild Dog and she repeatedly called this organization a gang.

Didn't they have another name for it? What the hell, the name can't just be 'Gang' right?

"Oh, yeah. There's a big intersection up there."

Intersection? What did that have to do with anything?

"What, does the newcomer not even know what this gang's name is?"

One of the middle-aged man burst into laughter.

"Rotary gang, dude. Remember that."

Ah.

* * *

After seeing this drunken chaos in the middle of the night, Loyar got mad, saying: "What gave ya the idea to make a kid drink alcohol?"

It felt like I got drunk and my elder sister dragged me away to scold me. I actually did get nagged, but it was very different from my old days. Did the former Prince not drink before?

Still, probably because I played around with the others at what felt like a welcome party, everyone seemed to see me as a very nice guy.

The next day, I made it my goal to somehow sort out the situation of the Rotary Gang.

Even though they were on my side, I didn't make the mistake of thinking that I knew everything about them. The reason I drank with them yesterday was obviously because I wanted to get to know the Rotary gang as well as its members as much as possible.

The Rotary gang had about 200 members. That's quite the number.

I didn't know what the exact income of the solicitors was, but if it was enough to support the everyday life of a nobleman, then one could assume that it was quite high. However, not only were they able to support a noblemen, but they were also able to cover food costs and received compensation money, you know?

Just how many candies did they have to sell a day for that to be possible? Even if every single one of them sold one candy worth 5 bronze coins every day, which would just amount to a thousand bronze coins and 10 silver coins.

That would just be a hundred thousand won. Even if everyone sold 10 pieces each, it would just be a million won. Moreover, not everyone is mobilized at once to sell candy. It seemed impossible to even maintain this group with just that.

Of course, there were people who begged as well as those who solicited, but I didn't know if that would be enough to maintain such a huge group.

The Rotary gang must have had a different source of income.

There was no way that Sarkegaar and Eleris didn't know about this.

It appeared that they didn't tell me on purpose.

Loyar, Eleris and Sarkegaar kept some secrets from me about the Rotary gang's source of income.

I was wondering what was going on, so I asked Loyar directly.

Loyar usually hung around the bon fire deep in the sewers, where no one ever set foot in, whiling away her time or sleeping.

I believe you have a different source of income somewhere else, but just what is it?

"You don't need to know."

Loyar cut me off as if she didn't want to tell me.

"Okay, then just answer me one thing."

"Yeah."

"Are you hurting people?"

"It's nothing like that, but sometimes that's what happens as a result of it."

That was how Loyar answered. It wasn't something that necessarily hurt people, but in some cases it might happen as a result of it.

"I heard that the gang has about 200 members."

"Yes, that's right."

"However, I believe there are only about 50 people living here."

50 was still a large number, but it certainly wasn't more than 200. This was an indirect question pertaining as to where the rest of the members were. Loyar let out a short sigh.

It's like she understood that I wouldn't back down so easily.

"I didn't tell you because I thought it would be better if you didn't know about these

kinds of things. I had no intention of deceiving you."

"Yeah, it might be a little dangerous if I knew about it, right? That's what you were thinking."

"Selling candies is just a disguise."

Soliciting wasn't their main goal.

"We are supported by the Gardium Thieves' Guild."

Their main goal was collecting information that organization wanted, when they wanted.

That's how it was possible to maintain a group of this size, Loyar added.

So, I was right about this being the Fantasy version of the Beggars' Sect.

The Rotary gang was the information gathering organization the Gardium Thieves' Guild outsourced. Even if beggars were driven out, they were rarely suspected. Then, at my question of whether my proposed change in soliciting method was meaningless then, Loyar shook her head.

"We are inextricably linked to the Thieves' Guild, but the more dependent we are on them, the more they will try to control us. If the gang can operate only with the gang's profit, that alone would be meaningful."

In the end, the proposal I made yesterday meant a lot to Loyar and Daibun.

If the group couldn't maintain themselves without the support of the Thieves' Guild, they would try to use the Rotary gang more and more freely. However, if the Rotary gang's own revenue grew, it could be freed from further interference from the Thieves' Guild.

I did notice that Daibun was unusually excited, so that might have been the reason.

It's complicated in many ways, but in the end it was all about money.

I could also understand now what she meant with that it could end up harming someone, as they didn't know what the Thieves' Guild would do with their

information.

“You don’t need to know much about this. You can just go to Temple using the fact that you are from this side and forget about us.”

She told the gang members that I was their future, however what she truly meant was that I should just focus on training myself at Temple. I didn’t have a reason to care about the Rotary gang’s matters.

Even if there were problems with the Rotary gang, Eleris suggested that I should just cut ties with them after I got them to pay tuition for me and I entered the school.

If I developed some kind of talent, I would be exempted from paying tuition fees and I would no longer have a need to be involved with the Rotary gang.

That was why Loyar, Eleris and Sarkegaar didn’t tell me about the gang’s secret source of income, which I didn’t need to know about.

“If I’ve satisfied you now, go with Daibun. You need to make an ID.”

Aside from gathering the admission fees, I needed an identity first. Let’s take a single step at a time.

Shit.

I had chosen a path when I was at the crossroads between just quietly waiting for the ending to pass and setting foot in the main story.

I wanted to live comfortably, but in the end, I ended up having to join Temple. If it couldn’t be helped, I would just have to do something about it, just like I did when I saved Charlotte the other day.

After entering Temple, I had to clench my teeth.

The future would change greatly depending on how strong I became.

At that time, Sarkegaar, Eleris and Loyar.

They all would find out that the Demon Realm wasn’t that important.

CHAPTER 22

I was told that Daibun created a lot of identities for people that had no origins. He took me to the Imperial City Bureau, so to speak, to a nearby district office. The person in charge looked tried as if he had seen Daibun many times, maybe even questioning why he had come again.

“You’re looking quite neat today.”

“It’s because I’ve brought a child this time.”

“Hey, I didn’t know you actually cared that much.”

Perhaps because Daibun played the role of my guardian today, he wore clean clothes and bathed today. I did the same. The person in charge didn’t seem to be all that fussy, as if this had already happened frequently except that we looked rather neat.

He didn’t have any suspicions or questions, completing the procedure swiftly.

When I received the Dreadfiend’s ring, I thought long and hard as to what to change my appearance to. Naturally I should have a lot of hair.

I shouldn’t be too handsome or too ugly.

I did want to live as a super handsome man, but I didn’t want to attract too much attention with my looks. That was the first thing Eleris told me.

So I tried to make myself look moderately good-looking. Blonde hair, slightly curly, blue eyes. Neither the hair color nor the eye color were especially rare. It was good enough to looks slightly better than average. I was a bit good looking, but not overwhelmingly handsome.

“Name.”

“I’m Reinhardt.”

“Where were you born?”

“I don’t know.”

“Whoa… You don’t even know from what town you come from?”

The person in charge looked at me rather frustrated.

“Yes. I don’t really remember, because I was abandoned when I was very young.”

“……”

He didn’t ask for much more information after that. He told me to put my hand on some mana stone in front of the table. He seemed to check something and then nodded.

“There’s definitely no data on you… You must have lived a rather righteous life.”

He suddenly spoke some nonsense, but I could roughly understand what that meant. This seemed to be something like a fingerprint reader, so if I were caught by the guards after I committed even a petty crime, my data would’ve already been registered. Homeless children like me were more likely to commit crimes, but seeing that I did not have such records, he presumed that I lived a righteous life.

After all, my birthplace and address were unknown, but I couldn’t just leave it blank, so I just made up a date of birth with those two. The birthplace was set as a suitable city that disappeared a long time ago and my address was south of the Bronzegate Bridge.

It seemed like I owned the bridge, but I actually lived under it.

Due to the advanced nature of the empire, they had a magic tool with which I was able to get a photo for my ID card.

Daibun and I left the office, sent off with the reminder to periodically come around to renew the ID.

So.

It really was no different from a modern district office.

They were too expedient! To a shocking degree at that!

However, that was good!

“That was pretty easy.”

“We gave him some things after all, so of course our stay would have been comfortable.”

I assumed that the person in charge was provided with a variety of things. I did feel that he was too easy going. If he got caught doing things like this, the outcome would be pretty clear.

I checked my ID that was in the form of a metal card.

It showed a picture, my name, date of birth and identification number. It wasn’t much different from a modern ID card. The same went for the registration of biometric data.

Only its appearance fit into medieval fantasy, but its convenience wasn’t much different from the modern world.

Once again, it was medieval **Fantasy**.

Anyway.

To sum it up in a single sentence.

It was convenient.

The town was still in an excited frenzy as a result of their victory. That atmosphere would last for a very long time. The improvement event when the war veterans returned would be on an even greater scale.

A long festival would follow.

Now that I had an ID, I decided to smoothly proceed with my admission to Temple.

“By the way, does Temple just admit anyone who has money? Wasn’t there something like… They won’t accept commoners or something?”

While we were on the way to Temple, Daibun tilted his head…

“Well, I never heard anything like that.”

The tuition fees were just so high that it was almost impossible to enter the school unless one was a noble’s child, had wealthy parents or was part of a merchant’s family.

If one had the confidence to pay hundreds of millions of won a year, depending on what major one picked, one was free to go. If one wanted to pursue higher education one would have to expect to pay twice as much.

50 gold coins was the average. Depending on ones major, tuition fees could rise to unimaginable amounts. Of course, there was a scholarship system, and there were cases where children were exempted from the tuition depending on how much they contributed to the empire.

So, after the end of the war, a huge amount of medals would be handed out, leading the Temple to be crowded with more freshmen than usual starting with the next year.

Temple was so expensive because they reinvested that money earned from that huge tuition fee into talented children. Most don’t get that much education.

Daibun took me to the Eredian district.

That would be where the Gwanak district and Seoul National University were located in Korea.

The only difference was that Temple was a much larger educational institution covering the entire Gwanak district. Therefore, it was only natural that the number of students was also astronomically high, meaning the money that went into this school was equally astronomical.

Not only that. In order to prevent non-students from wandering around the campus, Temple was equipped with physical barriers as well as large scale magic barriers that block those that weren’t students, faculty or people who had permission to enter. The Temple’s security, crime prevention system and barriers that I set up were exactly the same as the Imperial Castle’s.

There were children said to come from each country’s powerful family, so they created an environment in which they could fully focus on their studies without

worrying about their safety. That's why everyone was able to send their children off to a far away place with a peace of mind and it would be a big deal if any of the students were to get harmed or abducted while they were walking around the campus, so they put huge emphasis on the safety measures.

Of course, there were loopholes, because an incident had to happen after all.

If the defense and countermeasures were too perfect, incidents wouldn't be able to happen. No one wanted that. Especially me.

Anyway, Temple was practically a town's name, so it wouldn't make a lot of sense to say we arrived at Temple to begin with. The mana train couldn't even go inside of Temple.

We arrived at the admission office outside Temple. Daibun couldn't keep his mouth shut.

"This is my first time coming here, so why are there so many people here?"

The admission counseling center on its own was already huge enough to be called a school, and what was even more surprising was the number of people waiting near the entrance.

They were people waiting to get admitted. They all pulled a number ticket, all of whom were children with their parents next to them.

Daibun just couldn't understand that there were so many rich people out there trying to send their children to Temple.

I knew what this was about.

"Maybe that's what it is?"

"What do you mean?"

"Children with special talents can enter Temple for free. That's what they're trying to confirm here."

"Will there even be cases like that?"

“One could never know.”

I put it as if it was just a guess, however it was actually the truth. Even though it was difficult for them to pay the tuition, there were some parents who thought their child had special powers or was a genius.

Parents who couldn’t afford to pay the school fees would come here with their children, counting on that possibility.

Of course, most of them get sent back disappointed that there was no talent to be found, but they definitely did discover children with special talents, allowing them to enter the school.

The probability was just very low.

There were four forces in this world as a great whole.

Combat, Magic, Divine power.

And a power that was completely different from those three, a power that hadn’t been discovered even after a long time. Supernatural power.

Combat wasn’t just about being able to run well, but being able to display superhuman powers after one grew up. Such was the case with Artorius. The Knights of Duke Salerian who pursued me must have been those with similar powers. However, even on the side of the Demon Realm, there were monsters a lot stronger. There was a good reason why the Gargoyle was able to crush these veteran knights in a single blow.

In any case, those that have the potential to develop superhuman powers will go on to learn martial arts.

Children who were unusually smart or were discovered to have magic-related talents would go on to major in magic.

Those who show talent in divine power would go down the path of a priest or paladin.

And very rarely, children sometimes awakened to bizarre abilities. These powers, dubbed supernatural powers, had not yet been fully elucidated, because it wasn’t an

ability that could be learned and used like magic. Some people might not even be able to control them properly.

That was why the Empire was taking special care towards these supernatural powers. They weren't used as resources in the Demon World War, but they could be very dangerous depending on the person. Depending on the level of danger, users with supernatural powers that were thought to be out of control would eventually be disposed of secretly.

For children with supernatural powers, Temple served as an institution to socialize as well as learn how to control and develop their abilities.

Of course, most of the children gathered here would most likely fall under none of these four classes.

Having talent was rare. Really rare.

"By the way, with so many people here, would we even get our turn today?"

Daibun seemed to be thinking about a much more realistic problem. I was rather sure that if we were to line up there we would have to wait for a really long time. Perhaps so long until they closed their doors, so we couldn't know if we would even be able to get in today.

Of course, that was an unnecessary worry.

"We're here to apply for admission, not for consultation, right?"

We didn't come here to try for the free admission, because we didn't have enough money or something.

"Ah, that's right."

We proudly entered through the entrance to apply for admission, not into the admission counselation office.

Unlike the admission counselation office, the place to apply for admission was quiet. Of course, there were people there, but the place they waited in was decorated very luxuriously.

There were some parents who bawled their eyes out at the thought that they had to say goodbye to their children soon, perhaps because they came from afar, and some children who whined that they didn't want to go.

No matter how good Temple was, you could always find people like that. What did they know? Just because they had to part with their parents.

"Ehm, this is the window for admission applications…"

Seeing me and Daibun, who looked rather neat but also rather penniless, the counter staff tried to gently guide us to the other side.

"U, uh… That's…"

Daibun froze by my side, perhaps because that was his first time coming to a place filled with enormously wealthy people. No, why would my guardian be scared, huh?

"I came here to pay the admission fee."

On the contrary, when I spoke up calmly, the staff looked rather embarrassed.

CHAPTER 23

Chapter 23

The Admissions counseling center was practically crowded with people, but the admissions application office was quiet and each student had a one-on-one meeting with a counselor to receive counseling. Said counselor said they came because we said we had the money to apply, but they looked at Daibun with a look of disbelief.

“Uhm… This may sound rude, but may I tell you something in advance?”

“Yes. Go ahead.”

Daibun was completely frozen, so I just stepped up. The counselor continued with a slightly apologetic expression.

“There are some people who only pay tuition for one semester… Those who wish to first enter the school…”

It was true that 50 gold was a huge amount of money, but if they liquidated everything you had, there may be some people who could afford it, so there were some people who only payed for one semester like this. Was this about that?

“Can you not do that?”

If we couldn’t, wouldn’t that mean my plans wouldn’t go through? The counselor also spoke respectfully to me.

Perhaps it became a habit after meeting so many children of high-ranking people.

“Of course, if you don’t have the money to pay the tuition for this semester and the next… It’s a rule to expel these people after a certain period of time, but…”

“So, if I don’t have the money for the next semester, I won’t be able to register?”

“Yes, in principle. However, there is no reason to sanction this just because of that… As not all the students admitted like that would end up this way… Sometimes, that

is."

What?

Was there an additional setting or environment created by some probability that I didn't set up? The counselor hesitated to speak.

"They would first pay the tuition for just a single semester and then, well… They would try to build up friendships with other more financially stable children during that semester… They then would ask them to pay the tuition for the next semester… There were quite a few like that."

Oh.

I seemed to know what they were talking about.

"Children would whine to their parents that a close friend of theirs had to leave Temple because they lacked money… There were parents who would listen to them, but… This is rather damaging towards Temple's image, in many ways…"

Even if the tuition for Temple was pretty expensive, that was of little importance to those who were very wealthy. In Temple, where nobles, commoners and royalty lived together, friendships transcending their social status sometimes occurred.

Therefore, there were children who entered for one semester in the hopes of building such a connection, of course, it was mostly the parents that made them. Even if it wasn't just to make them pay their tuition fees, they calculated that it would be beneficial just to have an extremely wealthy friend.

The children might make a fuss about their friends leaving, but the parents might just go complain to Temple why they would let beggars just casually wander around their grounds.

I didn't even think of that when I set up Temple, but, indeed, short-term admissions could be used like that.

It's ridiculous, sad, and pathetic that I didn't think of that!

"After this became a problem, we decided to no longer admit children whose parents cannot financially support them well enough to allow them to study here for a

considerable amount of time while at Temple… The other problem is, that if children just leave after one semester, the other ones who were close to them would also end up very hurt…"

Temple's stance on this was understandable if anything. Changing classmates to often was also detrimental to the children, even if that student was just trying to mooch off of other kids… I would also want to implement such a policy if I were in their shoes.

However, I was planning on developing my talent after entering the school to become a permanent scholarship student, you know?

They probably wouldn't believe me if I started saying things like that.

Wouldn't my path be immediately blocked if I told them I was the successor of the Bronzegate Rotary gang?

Rather, I might have had a better chance if I had come from Sarkegaar's side.

"Once you have prepared the documents to prove your financial status, we can review them… You don't seem to have that much leeway though."

The counselor was very politely dismissing the two of us, however I wasn't particularly offended by that.

The Demon Prince couldn't enter Temple because he didn't have enough money.

We came with the confidence that I'd be easily admitted.

That soon turned into the feeling of needing to beg to be let in.

Daibun lowered his head as if he had committed a crime.

No, if you don't have money, then you don't. It's not your fault, dude.

What was I supposed to do? I didn't think I would come across such an obstacle. The Rotary gang had many people, but it was difficult to prove their finances. It may have been possible to borrow money through the Thieves' Guild, but that was just ridiculous, as that would rather prove that I had connections to a criminal organization.

As expected, my only other option would be to change my appearance again, get another ID card and enter as Sarkegaar's adopted son.

"Sigh, there's nothing more I can do…"

"Can't we do that inspection thing or something?"

When I was about to get up, Daibun said something out of the blue.

An inspection? What inspection?

"If it's an inspection…"

Daibun had a desperate expression on his face.

"He might be a genius or have supernatural powers. Well, wouldn't that be possible? Does it cost money to do the inspection?"

No, what's wrong with this man?

The counselor looked puzzled at Daibun's sudden outburst.

"Of course, we conduct inspections at the application consultation center, not at the admittance office… Inspections alone do not cost money… However, the chances of a child having a talent are rather slim. Most children don't have a single talent……"

What the counselor said was true. I didn't have any talent right now. So there was no hope for the thing Daibun suggested with such a desperate expression.

"He, hey. Let's just get out of here, Daibun."

"Well, we wouldn't know about that if we didn't try. How long does it take to get tested? Does it take long?"

"Ah… It doesn't take that long. You just have to touch the physical scanner… but you shouldn't do this here in the admittance office…"

The counselor seemed troubled by Daibun's sudden obstinate attitude. They looked between me and Daibun and eventually sighed slightly.

“Okay, since you came all the way here already…”

The counselor rummaged through one of the counseling rooms and took out a magic tool, saying: “It won’t take that long”. A physical scanner, so to speak, was this world’s talent and status meter. They determined one’s current ability and potential talent with these things.

This was the staple among convenient settings. If I didn’t add something like that, wouldn’t that have been too difficult? I would have had to describe it a lot more, and vague at that, so there was a need for a state window. Like that, one could immediately determine how strong a character was!

Stat windows would quantify strength in numbers. Without it I would have had to describe the strength through events. I would have to explain it like “Before I did this and that and I just couldn’t do it, but now I feel like I got stronger”.

That was just too annoying and difficult.

Attack power increased by 1000!

Wasn’t that just too comfortable to write? I love it.

But anyway, what Daibun was doing now was pretty much meaningless.

“I don’t think this will be worth it, Daibun.”

“If you got nothing to lose by doing this, then just do it. Or is there something wrong with that?”

It seemed like Daibun wanted me to take it as it was free anyway. He seemed to think that I desperately needed to enter Temple. I had another way, but Daibun didn’t know about that.

He was just thinking of me.

He was such a nice guy. However, that didn’t mean that I suddenly have some talent.

“You just have to keep your hands on the scanner. Wait for about a minute.”

To determine my talent, I will have to put my hands on a crystal ball, my talents will

then be printed out on a tablet like magic tool the counselor held.

There's nothing I have talent for.

It's not like they'll be able to see that I'm a demon through this, right? Or see that I have that skill Demon Domination, right?

I didn't think so. I had Sarkegaar's ring after all.

Demon Domination was a unique skill of the Arcdemon race. It was completely sealed after I changed using the ring.

Since it was an ability I could only use in the form of Valier, it should be hidden.

Of course, it might not be as well.

I should just run with the ring.

Let's just go back and think about how to change my looks next.

Yeah, let's do that.

"……Hm?"

The counselor suddenly tapped on the tablet. Was it that thing were you continue to tap on an iPad when it's not working properly?

"Did you find something?"

At Daibun's question, they shook their head.

"Urg… My apologies. It seems that it's broken. This item is only rarely used here."

They left the counseling room as if they didn't even know how that tool worked as they were actually more used to dealing with the wealthy, but didn't have any experience checking for talent. They said, they'd bring a new tool over.

"Didn't they find something?"

I shook my head at the expectant Daibun.

“No way.”

I checked my status again, but, of course, I couldn’t find a single talent in it. I knew my condition better than any magic tool could.

“I brought a new one. I even checked its functionality, so it should work this time.”

It seemed like the counselor was gradually getting exhausted. It probably was because we caused them extra work just for someone who had no talent at all.

I put my hand on the newly arrived crystal ball.

“……”

And, the counselor was speechless.

“What… Is it malfunctioning again?”

“Ah…”

The counselor furrowed their brows.

“How strange. I’ve never seen anything like this before.”

Perhaps because they were bewildered, but the counselor spoke informally this time.

“Is it something that breaks easily?”

“No, it’s not a very complicated tool after all.”

As if he couldn’t understand what was going on, the counselor showed the corresponding part of the tablet screen to Daibun.

Should I even call it a screen? It kept blinking. I kind of wanted to know what characters it displayed and why it just kept blinking. What was this, was that a talent? Do I have the talent to break machines? Wouldn’t it be better if I didn’t have that kind of talent?

That’s one of the shittiest, most common talents I had ever heard of! It was as bad as that kitchen disaster attribute, it was so common that it wasn’t even used anymore,

but now when it gets mentioned, it feels rather novel, but it was still hella old-fashioned, you hear!

Don't give me that!

The counselor asked me to put my hands down and put his own on the crystal.

"……Looks like the tool is working normally."

The counselor then asked Daibun if he had his talents measured before, then told him to put his hands on it this time.

"Certainly, the tool has no defects."

That screen blinked so much, it was apparent that I was the cause. The counselor asked me to put my hand back on the crystal.

"Just hold your hands on it for a second this time."

"Yes."

What the hell?

I held my hands on the crystal ball for circa a second as I was told. The tablet screen was again blinking wildly. Soon after, the counselor opened their mouth speechlessly.

"What… I think I know now. In that case… There were all sorts of cases before, but this is the first time I've seen something like this."

"What do you mean?"

Daibun approached the counselor with an excited expression on his face.

"There are cases where a subject doesn't show a specific talent, but 'aptitude'. For example, it's not developed enough to be a talent, but if the subject works hard, they would be able to be outstanding it a certain field… It's a kind of sub-concept of talent."

"Aptitude?"

Ah, I knew what that was.

“For example, someone with an aptitude for swordsmanship would be better in learning swordsmanship than archery or spearmanship. If a person with an aptitude for swordsmanship continued to study swordsmanship, he or she may become very gifted with the sword, or even excel more than someone who has talent in it, even if it isn’t a talent.”

“So what does all that mean?”

Daibun was excited.

“This device can read not only talent, but also what field the subject has an aptitude for. So they have this kind of service at the counseling center… Even if a child doesn’t have a talent, they will tell them what aptitudes they have. It was rare for a child who doesn’t have talent to not have any aptitude as well…”

Identifying aptitudes.

There were people who came from far away to receive counseling for the Temple admission, so even if the child wasn’t a genius, they will tell them what route would fit the child best.

‘Your child has no talent.

However, since he has aptitudes in these and other areas, please make him study this and this.’

Temple seemed to provide that kind of service.

The counselor turned the tablet screen and showed it to Daibun. It seemed that this was the first time that for them witnessing such a case.

Swordsmanship aptitude, Archery aptitude, Magic aptitude, Magic Sensitivity aptitude, Spiritual aptitude……

The screen was filled, showing all the aptitudes I had.

“It seems that Reinhardt was born with an aptitude for everything in the world.”

The screen wasn’t blinkin.

My aptitudes were almost infinite, so the screen was just constantly updating.

CHAPTER 24

“I really don’t have any idea what to call this. Were you born with God’s blessing… Or was this some type of supernatural power…?”

The counselor looked puzzled.

However, I knew what caused this.

I could certainly force an ability that I originally didn’t have to become my talent using achievement points. Even if I didn’t have enough points to do that, the possibility was still there.

Therefore, I was currently in a state where I could have all the talents in the world. I was born possessing every aptitude in existence, so that it wouldn’t be impossible for me to get certain talents.

The counselor seemed dumbfounded.

“In this case… I don’t know if it would be possible. Having an aptitude in both swordsmanship and archery wasn’t really a problem, but if this data is correct, then Reinhardt can use both black magic and divine power.”

I could both wield the power of darkness, as well as holy power. Of course, it would be impossible to be able to use both of them at the same time, but it was possible for me.

“B, by the way… There has never been a case… that a child was granted a special admission only based on their aptitude a, and not on talent……”

The counselor seemed to think that this wasn’t a problem he could solve with his authority alone.

“Then he could be admitted to Temple, right?”

Daibun seemed to block out the details and only heard what he wanted to hear.

“Thi, this is such an unprecedented situation, but as this is such a special case…”

The counselor blankly nodded their head.

“Perhaps, I think.”

“Good for you, man!”

-Hits!

“Urgh!”

Daibun slapped me on the back and shouted.

That almost killed me!

In the end, it seemed it was just a delusion that I knew my condition best.

Through Daibun’s useless insistence, I could now see for sure what my condition was like.

I didn’t know something like this would happen.

* * *

“An aptitude for everything?”

“Yes, that’s what they said.”

Loyar’s eyes widened when I told her the inspection’s results.

It wasn’t over just with the counselor’s words, after that a professional wizard appeared to precisely check my talents. So after suffering for a while it was confirmed that the judgement on my aptitudes was true.

“Hey, isn’t that a lot more than we expected?”

That’s what she said, but I could feel the tremendous admiration in her words. Even the previous Demon King wouldn’t have been like that. Although I had no talent, I was born with the aptitude to acquire talents in any field.

This may just be a correction caused by being able to interfere with my body using this system, but that correction in itself was already a tremendous ability.

These aptitudes included even opposing aptitudes.

It was possible for a person who had no talent or aptitude for swordsmanship to become a master swordsman by training swordsmanship, however it would be very difficult.

One had to overcome this wall with effort.

But why would a person who had no aptitude for it train swordsmanship? Wouldn't it be better to just wake up from those delusions?

No one could just have strengths. Even those geniuses who had many aptitudes and talents had also a good amount of inadequacies.

For example, if a person had an aptitude for divine powers, of course, they wouldn't be able to use black magic. Conversely, a person who had an aptitude for black magic would not be able to learn divine magic. Some abilities rejected their counterparts.

But I didn't have a single inadequacy.

Of course, I didn't know if it was possible to give myself inadequacies, but like hell that's going to happen. Am I crazy?

I went to Temple with the intention of paying the tuition for a semester, but ended up on a completely different path.

I'd have to return to the admissions office sometime later, but I've been told that they'll most likely decided on granting special admission. I didn't think much of it right now, but if there's some guy capable of being good at anything, it would be rather weird to not let him enroll through special admission.

This was an unexpected windfall. Just because they decided to let me enroll through special admission we didn't have to create a hole in the gang's funds.

There was no more need to to leave traces behind by paying the tuition with their money. Everyone wanted me to have an environment in which I could completely focus on improving myself in Temple. Like this everyone would be satisfied.

No matter what happened later with the Rotary gang, it wouldn't affect me.

"But you don't look very good, though?"

I smiled at Daibun's words.

"N, no, it's nothing. This is great. Like this I can enter even without being part of the gang."

But just as Daibun said, I wasn't in such a good mood.

Originally, my plan was to gradually develop my talents over a semester and then I was planning to be exempted from tuition leading me to join the main story through said talent.

However, in terms of development, I might have a higher chance to enter the main story like this rather than as a simple scholarship student…

Temple had two types of special classes.

The Royal Class, which one could enter through talent, and the Orbis Class, which one could enter through skill.

Students with exceptional talent entered the Royal Class.

Students who lack talent but gained outstanding abilities through hard work entered the Orbis Class.

There was a certain rivalry between these two classes, but that would come into play later. It would be only after a long time that the Orbis Class was mentioned.

Anyway.

Entering the main story meant that I would soon join one of Temple's special classes, which will probably be the Royal Class.

There was a high chance that I would enter the Royal Class, because I was recognized for my potential talent and not my outstanding ability.

Originally, I planned to slowly enter the story by building my power for one semester

and then climb to that position later.

However, I would end up entering the Royal Class right from the beginning.

That meant, that I would be together with the main characters right when the main story starts. I would bump into them without thinking much or planning to do so. If the story changed because of my actions, I would receive some achievement points, but the consequence of that would be that the story might bounce into weird directions, all the events would become unpredictable.

I would have to use the achievement points I received by changing the future to see how the future changed, I would gain nothing from that. I could get other benefits, but those achievement points are the most important to me right now, so I couldn't just waste them.

That's why I wanted to take that one semester to plan things out, but that opportunity got stolen from me.

"Phew…"

Therefore, I couldn't help but sigh deeply thinking about the special admission.

Anyway,

I was pretty sure this development is happening purposefully.

* * *

What kind of novel was [The Demon King is Dead] you may ask?

Although it was a novel I wrote, it was more like part of my dark history though. It got the worst ranking and tons of bad reviews.

This was supposed to be a slice-of-life story that took place after the Demon King got defeated. The story took place in [Temple], located in the Imperial Capital Gardium, where people with immense power and wealth gathered.

Although they nurtured talents specialized in combat, teaching things like magic and marital arts, Temple, who was recognized as the cradle of all learning, also encompassed elementary, secondary and higher education.

The number of students, excluding the faculty, exceeded 100,000.

From elementary school onwards, they adopted a similar teaching system as universities. On could apply for classes one wanted to take. Therefore, there were a lot of kids who never ran into each other even though they were in the same class if they don't take the same courses.

Even in a place like that, the main stage was the Royal Class, one of the two most important classes in Temple, the other one being the Orbis Class.

Those two classes were filled with the most talented of the Empire, the ones placed the most expectations on. Of course, they all held permanent scholarships. However, let's keep the Orbis Class out of this talk for now. I won't run into them anyway, for the time being.

Anyway, one of the two flagships of Temple.

Royal Class' Perks.

Even if a course is already filled to capacity, one may still apply for said course. Even courses that go beyond one's grade could be applied for, as consideration for the geniuses. Therefore, the Royal Class was inevitably the object of envy and jealousy of ordinary students.

In addition, Temple shoulders the cost to maintain a certain level of dignity as well as a luxurious dormitory exclusive to the students of the Royal Class.

There were many who tried to get into the Royal Class using their money and power. However, one could only enter Temple through money, however the Royal Class didn't know status, rank or wealth. Only talent determined whether one could enter or not.

Higher education at Temple started with high school.

It didn't end there.

Temple's higher education, including the Royal Class, consisted of 6 grades just like elementary school.

That meant that a 6th grade Highschooler wasn't that uncommon in this world.

Simply but, it was like graduating from middle school and then immediately attending collage for six years.

In realtiy, it was more like starting from the first year of high school and ending with the third year of college. Of course, it was possible to attend for three years and then graduate, but the education is usually completed after the sixth year. After that, there's university, but that was more like a graduate school.

The Royal Class, that could be said to be the best of the best, divided the classes based on talent. The main character belonged to 1st year Class B of the high school section.

What was different about this was that the Royal Class, which selected people based on talent, divided the grades based on talents in the early stages of high school.

That meant between Class A and Class B of the Royal Class, Class B was the inferior class, which was made up of children with lower ranking talents.

Since the class was divided in order of talent, the members of the Royal Class remained the same even when they reached the next grade. Unless someone got eliminated or dropped out in the middle, or a person was added, the number of classmates didn't change from the first year of high school until graduation.

Class B, who was the inferior group of talented elites, is where the main character appeared. He first got confused by his defeat-ridden classmates, endured humiliation and ridicule from the kids of Class A who were more talented and powerful and eventually they were able to overtake Class A with the power of love and friendship. That's the kind of youth drama I was planning to write.

Not interesting at all? Sounds like it was no fun to read?

Of course, it was hella boring.

Stories about weaker students overcoming stronger students through hard work was rather common and nothing new. The Power of Love and Friendship? People are doing well on their own these days. If you let your classmates suck away your own life like carcinogens, they'll think their hot shit after you cared for them and helped them grow.

I should have stopped writing right away after hearing what the person in charge

told me.

Anyway.

It was now February.

The main story would also start with the new semester in the same year as the end of the Demon World War.

[You have been admitted to Temple Royal Class 1-A.]

And, the Temple Admissions Office judged my 'infinite aptitude' to be an advanced talent.

There was nothing really good about that.

Class A would be the place I'd receive my education in later.

* * *

"Are you worried?"

I was currently at Eleris' scroll shop.

"I'd lie if I said no."

I sighed.

"It's nice that they think I have some crazy talent. Being able to get in through special admission is also good, but it seems difficult to actually meet these expectations as fast as they hope……"

I didn't have to be around the Bronzegate Bridge all day, so I went to visit Eleris. The Rotary gang was also relieved of its financial pressure thanks to me getting in through special admission.

So until the entrance ceremony I was going back and forth between Bronzegate and Eleris' scroll shop.

"I'm sure you'll do a good job."

Eleris gave me reassuring smile. Yeah, I could become anything. I knew that I was just nervous because I was nothing and hadn't done anything yet.

Thanks to my aptitudes, which were judged as an advanced talent, I was able to bypass numerous procedures required for admission. If one had a highest-ranking talent, Temple didn't simply admit the student, rather they just take them in. That was why all the sloppy parts about my identity and origin were just glossed over.

Rather, Temple itself became my guardian.

Things worked out incredibly well. However, even if things worked out somehow, there was a definite future, so thinking about my friends from Class A made my head hurt.

Above all else, living in the dormitory without Eleris, Loyar or Sarkegaar who were practically my guardians, was one more reason for my nervousness.

In general, there's this widespread opinion that accidents did not happen at Temple.

However, as a writer, I mean, I did add in many incidents to happen. I was well aware how sloppy Temple was, or rather than knowing, I made it that way.

Eleris grabbed my hand while I was lost in my thoughts. The vampire's low body temperature felt unfamiliar, but at some point that coldness started to feel like warmth.

"We will support Your Highness with all our heart. And even if you enter Temple, does that mean that you are banned from going out?"

"I'm not, but still…"

They wouldn't ban me from going out or something.

If I wanted to see them I could come out and visit Sarkegaar, Loyar or Eleris.

"Anyway, are there any things you need to take with you?"

"I don't have that many things. I would wear a school uniform most of the time anyway though."

I would have to go to the dormitory tomorrow, so I had to take something there, but I didn't know what I should bring because I'm literally in a position where I have nothing on me but my clothes.

As I filled out various forms before my admission, and was told everything I needed to know, I didn't really think I need to take much.

"By the way, why did you want me to enter Temple?"

I asked the question I couldn't find the answer to the other day.

Eleris didn't want me to become stronger, but she still encouraged me to go to Temple. Eleris smiled at my question.

"Because I think if you were to stay close to humans, you would come to love them."

This was a slightly different logic from Sarkegaar, who wanted me to get to know humans to use their knowledge against them.

Eleris seemed to want me to get to love them.

Well, I mean I didn't feel any real love towards humanity in the first place.

"You might regret this later."

Eleris laughed at my words.

"I'll think about it when the time comes."

The strangest one of the bunch wasn't actually Sarkegaar, but Eleris. She brought over a trunk from somewhere.

Rather she summoned it here with a snap rather than bringing it over.

"What's this?"

"These are plain clothes you can wear. You can't just wear your uniform all the time."

It seemed like she didn't want to send me off empty handed. Eleris then took off her necklace and put it around my neck.

“This is…”

“Do you remember that I called myself Tuesday?”

“Ah, I do.”

I didn’t really understand what it meant, but was it something about that seven nights something?

“I believe you have forgotten about this as well, so let me explain. There are seven vampire clans who call themselves the Houses of the Seven Nights.”

“Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, like that?”

“Yes, that’s correct.”

Those were pretty simple names.

“Each Family specialized in the magic type of the corresponding element.”

“There’s elemental magic based on the days of the weak?”

“Yes, the Monday and Sunday clan disappeared a long time ago, so it didn’t get handed down which type of magic they held, but Tuesday is fire, Wednesday is water, Thursday is wood, Friday is metal and Saturday is earth.”

(T/N: To carlify, this is based on the Hanja of the words for the days of the week. Each day except Monday and Sunday have a type of element in their name as mentioned by Eleris here. 月曜, 火曜, 水曜, 木曜, 土曜, 日曜)

While I still could kind of understand the power of the moon, I couldn’t even imagine how vampires could use something like sun magic. Since Vampire Lords could withstand sunlight, maybe it wasn’t that strange that that clan could use solar magic.

“This is an heirloom of our clan and the symbol of our house, the ‘Flame of Tuesday’.

The necklace Eleris gave me held a small golden pendant studded with a blood drop like ruby.

“Eleris, then, does that mean… They call the heads of a clan Vampire Lords?”

“That’s how it would be, but…”

Eleris seemed to be one of the most powerful Vampires and yet it still wasn’t easy for her to stay out in the sun, even though it’s not to the point of impossibility.

“So, why did you give me this necklace…?”

“If this ring harbours the power of the Dreadfiends, what do you think this pendant could do?”

A pendant harbouring the power of a clan that specialized in fire magic.

“It will enable me to use fire magic, right?”

“Of course, it would only work within the confines of Your Highness amount of mana. It’s a little different from Sarkegaar’s ring. You’d be able to summon flames just by using mana, no need for complicated chants.”

I didn’t understand it fully, but just hearing her explanation just made me realize what a ridiculous item this was.

Magic was a power only geniuses could use. This thing enabled even an idiot to summon flames if they have enough mana.

Scrolls were only one-time use items, but with this I’d be able to permanently use this magic.

A great treasure, indeed.

“Do you want to try it out?”

“Hmm…”

By using the Flame of Tuesday I could use fire magic. My mana level was at 9.9 as far as I could remember. I knew that this was quite high for someone my age.

I held the pendant in my hand and imagined flames in my head, just like Eleris told me a second ago.

-Flare!

Then a Flame appeared in front of my eyes.

“This is how it works.”

“But only this much?”

I didn’t expect something of the leven of a fireball to appear, but this was just on the level of a lighter flame. Did I actually have as much mana as a rat maybe?

“Your Highness isn’t able to make full use of your mana yet. If you learn powers related to magic sensitivity or magic control, you would be able to create more powerful flames with the same amount of mana.”

So in the end that’s all I could do with this powerful treasure due to my lack of ability.

“Why are you giving me this?”

“There might be some emergencies in which Your Highness wouldn’t be able to do anything, so having this would be advantageous, right?”

I didn’t really know what I could do with a lighter flame though.

“Still, something like the symbol of your clan… Can you just give me something like that?”

“If I gave you something of similar value to what Sarkegaar gave you, wouldn’t the chances increase that you’ll stand on my side in the future?”

Eleris spoke while laughing jokingly. Sarkegaar and Eleris both gave me their family’s heirlooms.

It was quite funny.

Sarkegaar, the one that wanted war, gave me something that would help me live a peaceful life in the human world.

The pacifist Eleris, on the other hand, gave me an item related to destruction.

“Also, it would be rather shameless to proudly wield that place’s items while

deciding to betray them."

Eleris seemed to want to relinquish all the responsibilities and obligations she held as a Clan Head as well as the last member of the Tuesday Clan with this. It seemed like Demons couldn't let go of their families even while betraying them.

"I just have one thing to ask."

"Yes, Your Highness."

"If I use this, just this little flame comes out, but what would happen if you were to use this?"

I was just able to produce a flame the size of a lighter flame. The simplification of the magic chant would be a tremendous thing for a wizard, rather than someone as ignorant as me.

So how much power could this little thing exert in the hands of someone like Eleris?

"I don't know, because I've never used this before."

One could tell just by looking into her eyes that she was lying.

It seems like there were some painful memories resurfacing in her, but I saw that this pain only briefly passed by her eyes. Eleris told me one last thing, looking straight into my eyes, holding my shoulders.

"Your Highness, this is by no means a good item."

Eleris didn't seem to appreciate this heirloom called Flame of Tuesday.

"……"

"It's an object that responds to darker emotions. The more malice you hold against someone the greater the flame would be."

This seemed to be something I should be careful about while using.

An object that could sense its owner's emotions, especially hostility and malice. It was an item that completely fit the preconceived image humans had of demons.

“I hope you’ll understand why I offered the Flame of Tuesday to you.”

She didn’t want me to hurt anyone, but she was worried about me so she gave me something like that.

If something happened at Temple, I should only use this if I was in a life-threatening situation.

That’s what Eleris meant.

Eleris was afraid of me, but she valued me just as much.

“Thank you, I plan to never use this until I graduate.”

Eleris smiled brightly, as this was what she wanted to hear the most.

She really was the weirdest one.

* * *

The Heirloom of the Dreadfiend clan.

The Heirloom of the Tuesday clan, which was part of the Seven Nights.

I was the only heir to the Darklands, the Demon Realm that got unified as one nation, so it wasn’t so strange for me to hold these items.

Still, a beggar-turned-Temple student was now in possession of two great relics of the imperial level.

That definitely was suspicious.

The ring, of course, was a camouflage item, so it had transparency and dematerialization magic properties on its own, so it just looked like an ordinary metal ring, and Eleris put an old looking metal case around the exterior of the pendant that otherwise looked precious. It certainly seemed like the better option to put a normal looking casing around it than camouflage magic that might get detected. So in the end all I had was what looked like a worn-out ring and pendant. To be honest, I’d believe it if someone told me these things were picked up by a beggar wandering around.

Since I received some amazing items from both Eleris and Sarkegaar, I had the thought that Loyar might give me something as well, but then again how could I expect anything great from someone wearing rags, chilling around a bonfire all day? She should just take good care of herself and eat well.

That was what I thought, but…

"……What is this?"

"Pocket money."

Loyar handed me a bag of gold coins to use at Temple.

Loyar told me to tell her if I needed any more money, because the issue of the admission fee got solved anyway, and Temple would only pay for some of my living costs.

Loyar was the most important instance to me in the long run.

It seemed that their progress of spreading their power to the mana trains was going smoothly.

Tomorrow, I'd finally move into Temple's dormitory.

Of course, it wouldn't be good for me to continue living here, but I was exhausted just thinking about moving into an environment I knew nothing much about, filled with major characters.

It wouldn't have been so bad just living at Eleris' place.

I couldn't fall asleep that night, maybe because I was just thinking about all the trouble this would bring.

However, I made a promise.

I was going to do the things I set out to do and I would do them well.

I felt it in Charlotte's case.

It wasn't such a bad thing saving someone who was supposed to die.

As a result, I could save people who died because of my karma. If you asked me, I believed this to be a good thing.

This was a slice-of-life story.

But even slice-of-life stories were written by people who were talented in that field.

So the biggest reason for this novel's failure, the reason all the readers who kept going until the middle of it fell away, was…

I didn't have the talent for writing these kinds of stories until the very end. As the events and materials I had planned out were depleted, my writing lost its way and as a result I lost my motivation to move the story forward.

Therefore.

I just flipped the table.

This crazy novel only came into being because of the author's lack of ability to create any more events.

…In the middle of that story…

…I made Gates suddenly opened.

CHAPTER 25

This was called self-satisfaction.

Naturally, the readers dropped the novel in disgust of that sudden development. But what should I have done? At the time I thought that would be the best development. Of course, it would have been better if I had just ran away, leaving it unfinished as usual, but then I had a sudden compulsion to complete it somehow.

If you do stupid things, one day you will end up paying for them.

Because of that crazy development, I now had to eat the shit I produced myself. So whether I liked it or not, that chaotic situation in which gates suddenly opened in this world, sending this world to ruin was approaching with every moment.

It was a slice-of-life story for one half and the other was some weird Gate diving story.

I now had three options.

I could wait for the ending to come in a safe place, ignoring the fact that I had knowledge about these Gates.

I could train until I got to a state where I could fight before the Gates opened and jump right into the situation.

And lastly.

I could eliminate the situation of the Gates opening by using the “Rewriting” Function.

For the second option I didn’t really have to join Temple, but the third option absolutely required me to be part of the main story to get achievement points.

As I had already experienced several life or death situations in the prologue part, I had no confidence whatsoever in fighting or seeing someone die right in front of me, so I had no other choice but to somehow prepare for the Gate situation.

If it were up to me I'd choose to hide somewhere and just watch the fire slowly burning out without concerning myself with it.

Even though it was cowardly, my life was more precious.

However, Sarkegaar, Loyar and Eleris had pushed me away from that. As my excuses were blocked one by one, I had no other choice but to give up.

Anyway, if this reality really is the shit I made, I had to take some responsibility. It's impossible for me to take full responsibility, but if I were able to do something about a given situation, I should absolutely do that.

I didn't know if it were possible to stop the Gates from opening. It was probably impossible.

If that didn't work, then I had to become stronger through achievement points and decimate the monsters coming out of the Gate.

So, anyway, part because of my own self-righteousness, I somehow had to do something about this future only I knew about

"Phew…"

I arrived at the first page of the main story.

Temple.

I had to either become the strongest on the continent, or somehow get rid of that Gate situation. Or I might end up with useless talents, that were neither this nor that.

I wasn't even good at the things I liked, so should I try harder on things I didn't like then?

Cold sweat ran down my face.

* * *

Temple was divided into three main sections: the elementary, secondary, and higher education facilities. 6 years of elementary school, three years of middle school and 6 years of highschool. There was also a graduate school for further education.

Of course, there were numerous subsidiary facilities and special purpose halls scattered here and there. In other words, there were stadiums and other special facilities, including concert halls.

As the campus was just too large to traverse by foot, Temple also had a separate tram line that only operated inside of it. Of course, it was free.

Entering Temple for the first time, I was able to get inside with my pre-issued student ID including my admission permit.

The vast campus of Temple accentuated by the blue sky spread out in front of me. It didn't really just feel like my imagination came to life.

"Huh."

It was much grander, much bigger and neater than I imagined, so I couldn't keep my mouth shut. There was no way after all that I could picture this with just those limited written descriptions I gave.

Among countless students wearing various uniforms coming and going, I stood blankly at the entrance, not knowing whether I should call this feeling I felt, being astonished or being moved.

There were many different school forms in Temple, so I created this set-up of there being diverse uniforms, but seeing that variety right in front of me felt strange.

The statues and street lamps placed beside the huge park-like streets, as well as the various educational facilities, seemed more like independent works of art rather than school decorations.

The tram was also just running quietly along the tracks built on this huge campus.

It was a mix between the Classical and the Modern, and in a way, it was a kind of disorder only I was aware of.

Now wasn't the time for that though. I could admire it later.

The place I should be heading to is the Royal Class' dormitory near the higher education facilities.

As there were more than 100000 students, the dormitory facilities were bound to be enormous.

The Royal Class of the Department of Higher Education had about 20 students per grade, and the high school segment had six grades, so there were 120 students in the Department of Higher Education in total.

That was a fairly small number. This also showed that only very few people actually had talents.

So the class I would be entering had on average of 10 students in each class. 20 students would be divided into class A and B. Although I got added in later, so there would probably be 21 students this time.

I got off the Temple-owned tram at the place written in the guide.

As soon as I got off, I saw a ramp lined with columns leading to the dormitory building.

It felt incomprehensible to me how this 7-story dormitory only housed around 120 people.

It was unbelievably huge. Although I wrote 'They receive great preferential treatment!', however, seeing this with my own eyes I began questioning if this was really okay. I didn't think that even a high-ranking lord could live in a place like this, you know?

I was both bitter and happy because of the many things I wrote into my novel.

I walked between those columns. As their shadows flitted past me at a regular pace I started feeling more and more nervous without realizing it. I felt like I was about to enter a place I wasn't supposed to enter.

I thought it would be rather burdensome if I continued to feel this way everyday. Let's forget about the Bronzegate Underground Sewers, but Eleris' scroll shop was much more comfortable compared to this.

Upon going through the entrance of the dormitory located at the end of the colonnade, I could see a high dome-shaped ceiling, looking up, and a marble staircase leading to the upper floors.

The lobby was communal and was connected to the 1st and 2nd floor through the staircase on the left and right. I knew this because I set it up like that…

The 1st floor was for the 1st years, the 2nd floor was for the 2nd years, etc.

Therefore, as their grade goes up, students become more and more annoyed. Of course, I wrote that there was something similar to an elevator. It worked with floating magic or something like that. The thing in the middle of the dome seemed to be that elevator.

Looking at the structure of the building, the rooms for Class A were on the left and those for Class B were on the right. All the students belonging to Class A regardless of grade lived on the left side. The same went for Class B and the right side.

I roughly knew what was going to happen from this point on.

“You’re a freshman, aren’t you?”

“Ah, yes.”

A senior student, wearing the same uniform as me, approached me with a file folder.

A person wearing a female uniform…

“I’m Ceres Van Owen, a 5th grader and the president of the Royal Class Student Council. Hello?”

“Ah, yes. Hello.”

Yes, that’s how it was. Although the Department of Higher Education had an overall student body president and vice president, each school had their own separate student body president and vice president.

Therefore, the Royal Class had its own student council president and vice president.

The number of students the student council had to manage was enormous, so they had a lot of authority. To begin with, there were more than 50000 students who were part of the Department of Higher Education.

However, the authority of the Royal Class Student Council, which had less than one-

hundredth of the High School section's total number of students, was also quite high. This was the Royal Class after all, one of the the two pillars of Temple, and not some regular school.

Of course, due to the relatively smaller number of members, the Royal Class Student Council had no other choice but to help out with certain things.

Like guiding new students.

No matter how well received they were from outsiders, there was no denying that there was a shortage of manpower within the Royal Class.

I handed my Student ID to the senior student who introduced herself as the student council president and she looked through her files looking for my name.

"Reinhardt, no last name… Class 1-A. You are assigned room A-11. Let's get along from now on."

"Ah, yes."

She reached out her hand and I grabbed it. Students of the 5th grade of High School were already adults since they were 21 years old.

The student council president in front of me would be in her last year next year and would probably be busy, so we probably wouldn't have many contact points. However, leaving a good impression was never wrong.

Regardless of her actual skills, the Royal Class Student Council President was the most powerful person in this dormitory after the faculty. She had a lot of real power. Then she spoke to me with a smile.

"Perhaps after everyone arrives, they'll make you gather in the central lobby to give a brief reception and some warnings. It's okay to take a short rest after you unpack everything, but don't fall asleep too deeply if you decide to. Understood?"

"Yes."

I dragged my suitcase behind me and headed for the hallway on the left. The sunlight trickling through the window intertwined with the shadows formed a complicated net on the floor. I never imagined I'd see a scene like this in my whole life.

As soon as I passed the main lobby, a lobby dedicated to Class 1-A appeared before me. Although it was smaller than the other one, it was still a formidable hall equipped with sofas, tables and reading tables where one could sit down at and relax.

That was where the kids of Class B got together, ate snacks, chatted and conspired, although that refered to the lobby on the opposite side.

Starting from this hall there were corridors leading to the dormitory, the magic lab, the reading room, the indoor gym and many more additional facilities including a restaurant. It kind of served as a hub. The main hub would probably be the main lobby.

There were some facilities added as one rose in grade, but they were mostly similar in layout.

Now that I came to a place I could properly recognize in this world I felt more comfortable, but in the end, I was still missing the details so there was still some awkwardness left in me.

It was a complicated feeling that was difficult to describe.

I entered the hallway leading to the dormitory and headed for room A-11. Just by tagging my student ID, the door opened immediately. That wasn't new to me. Everything was just powered with magic.

This room was quite large for a single person. There was a neatly arranged bed, a large wardrobe and windows. There was even an indoor shower facility. The inside of the room wasn't as fancy as the outside, but was designed with a clean, modern feel to it. Rather, this was much more convenient. If it were too flashy it would just hurt my eyes.

Currently only the basics were present in this room, but if a student requested for it other things would be added. Whether it was training equipment for physical training or a magic research lab. As long as it was within Temple's power anything could be added to this room.

This was the best environment in which one could completely focus on developing one's talents without having to worry about other things.

When I opened the closet, I found many uniforms custom made to fit me hanging in it. This was a service ordinary students at Temple could only dream of.

I took my things out of the suitcase and put them into the closet one by one. I didn't even bring that many things because I could get anything I needed just by asking for them.

The thing I should always carry with me is the ring of the Dreadfiend clan and the Flame of Tuesday in case for unforeseen emergencies.

After unpacking my belongings, I lay down on the bed.

I didn't know how much earlier I arrived, but I was the only one that got off at the Royal Class Dorm station.

Once all the students arrived, I had to face both the students of Class A and Class B when the student council summoned us. They said it would just be a simple reception, so more like a greeting and not a party.

There I would get to see all the characters I had written.

However, there was something that's been bothering me.

My room.

Room A-11.

Temple was a place that liked to rank people. Of course, the room number wasn't just randomly given out. Room A-11 meant that the admission office saw my "talent" as the lowest among the First-Year Class-A talents.

Yes, me becoming part of Class-A was a miracle in itself. I had no talent at all after all, although my aptitudes were infinite.

I was put into Temple's Royal Class, which was divided into Class A and B, and there I was, the lowest ranking one in Class A.

What the hell?

I could already imagine what kinds of disputes I will fall into.

Oh, you're that 'infinite aptitude' guy I've heard about? But aren't you actually all squishy?

Hey, hey, aren't you just weak?

You're in Class A? How the hell did that happen?

I thought I'd probably get to hear stuff like that.

Haah.

I would have rather gone to Class B.

Sigh, would I be beaten up by students higher ranking than me?

I didn't want to be first or last. It's just that this strange situation itself was like dogshit.

And I didn't know if things would go well or not.

It seemed that no one fell in rank because of me at least.

Obviously, Class A and Class B were set to have 10 people in them, but here I was, number 11. So that meant that I came in as a member outside of the original quota.

Wouldn't it be fine if some hot headed idiot got dropped out? Wasn't there someone like that, who would get kicked to make place for me?

No, wait, they might have ended up going down the list and pushing someone important out. Thank god, it was the way it was.

I could see various people getting off the mana train in the distance from my window. It seemed like they were arriving one by one.

If my guess was true.

There obviously would be things happening that deviated significantly from the first part right at the start.

I wondered what would happen.

I took out the notebook and writing instrument I had prepared.

Let's get my thoughts in order. It would probably be hard for me to remember every single one and there might also be the possibility that there are some characters who had no presence so I didn't know them at all. There were some characters who only appeared in my setting notes and were otherwise like air. I set up all 20 students' personal details, but not all of them played a major part, because if all 20 of them played an important role my writing would have become a mess.

Of course, my writing went to shit after the whole Gate opening thing in the middle.

Anyway.

Class A and B.

I should organize the personal data of all the students that come to my mind.

One, two, three.

"……"

Because there were more than seven people, I couldn't seem to remember properly.

My memory was just great…

I worked my brain hard to figure out all the names of all the unused characters and organized them. Fortunately, although I couldn't remember all their names, I still knew what kind of people they were.

* * *

It was late afternoon or early evening.

[All students of the Royal Class, please gather in the lobby. All students of the Royal Class, please gather in the lobby.]

Finally, a broadcast calling for all the students of the Royal Class appeared. I came out of my room which was on the far left and was able to see the backs of my classmates walking around as they listened to the broadcast.

Elite or whatever.

I now had to act as a freshman in high school.

As much as I thought, that I had to hurry up, my steps became heavier and heavier. I was already exhausted.

The students of Class A and B gathered in the lobby on the first floor. The student council members stood on the high stairs that led up.

And there were people on each floor leaning over the railings looking down on us. The 6th graders who were on the top floor, didn't even come out to look.

But why did all the senior students decide to look at the new students coming this time?

"Come on, both Class A and Class B, line up in your room order, starting with number 1"

Everyone lined up at the student council president's words. They didn't have any discipline though. Well, they were kids after all. I was at the back of Class A.

Normally the senior students shouldn't come to see the new students, which was a rare event every year.

However, here they were looking at all of us. I already found something that was different right at the start.

"Well, shall we start with A-1?"

"I'm Bertus de Gardias!"

Just hearing that name gave me goosebumps. Bertus de Gardias, I heard the voice of the man who almost caused my death serveral times.

It was such a lively and bright voice for someone so evil.

He didn't exude any form of authority and seemed like a hard worker.

It was strange.

Originally, Bertus entered Temple while hiding his identity, but now he was openly introducing himself with his last name. So the entirety of the Royal Class was aware of the fact that he was the Prince.

So, originally, the other students shouldn't have been interested in the new students, but after hearing the news that the Prince entered the school, they became eager to come watch.

The introductions continued. I simply said my name.

Of course, no one paid any attention to me.

"Now then, shall we start the introductions of Class B? Now, B-1, could you introduce yourself to your friends?"

It immediately became clear to me why the direction of this event's progress was different from the original one…

"I am Charlotte de Gardias."

Someone who shouldn't have been here.

Charlotte was in Temple's Royal Class.

CHAPTER 26

The Imperial Prince and the Imperial Princess both entered the Royal Class and joined the same grade. They announced that the princess was alive, but she never appeared in public.

But then she suddenly entered Temple.

Of course, Bertus was aware of her admission. He was also the main villain of the story. However, Bertus didn't use his authority to join the Royal Class.

As he was a major character, I was, of course, able to give a brief outline of the character.

Number A-1.

Name: Bertus de Gardias.

Talent: Swordsmanship, Magic Sensitivity, Magic Control.

Characteristic : Narrow eyes. (T/N: Like those characters that never open their eyes of which a lot are kinda two faced)

Remarks : A Bastard.

In front of others, he acted kind and got along with everyone, however, he, in fact, was someone who did a lot of bad things when left alone. A bastard who was originally good, but explodes once he got angry. I didn't even think that he even had naturally narrow eyes.

And those three simple talents.

Swordsmanship, Magic Sensitivity, Magic Control.

Those were talents Duke Salerian forced to bloom by spending a great deal of money on Bertus. Ever since he was young, he had to undergo countless surgeries in order to get these three talents. With money and power, talent could also be made to

bloom by force. Although that was only possible if one were the Imperial Prince.

So what were these three talents?

After a long study conducted by the Empire on why someone wouldn't be able to reach the master-class even though they trained hard for a long time, they came to the following conclusion.

A combat-related talent, magic sensitivity and magic control.

It was almost impossible to reach the Master-class if one had no aptitude for any of those three. There were some who had talents in combat related weapon skills, but it was very rare to have an aptitude for magic sensitivity and control at the same time. If having them as aptitudes was rare already, then, of course, it was even rarer to have both as talents.

However, Bertus had all three as talents, not as aptitudes. His talent was swordsmanship and magic sensitivity and control were essential requirements.

To become a master in swordsmanship, that is.

In other words, he would become a Swordmaster.

* * *

The Imperial Family was also getting educated at Temple. It was a kind of advertisement and proof of credibility. If one said Temple was the best educational facility in the world and then went and taught the Imperial Family separately, anyone would probably have doubts about the reliability of those words.

However, in the Empire, the Imperial Family was also educated here.

So it was no wonder that its reliability and safety skyrocketed. Of course, the Imperial Family could just get educated separately , but with them deciding to sned their children to receive their education at Temple, other people couldn't help but place their trust in its security.

Were they also living in the dormitory?

Needless to say.

That was why so many sent their children to Temple with such confidence. Because they thought their children would be provided with the same level of education and safety as the Imperial Family.

Bertus had already known about that.

So he was expecting Charlotte to come to Temple to some extent.

It was rumored that he would come to this place, so I was a little hesitant to come directly to the Royal Class and not as just another regular student. There was a high chance that I'd be caught by that smart guy.

The reason why the Duke forced his talent to bloom was because no one of the Imperial Family ever belonged to the Royal Class. A place that one could only enter through talent and not through power. If the Prince entered the Royal Class and graduated with excellent grades, he'd be able to build enormous authority just by doing that.

Naturally.

Imperial Princess Charlotte de Gardias could use the same method. What was possible for the Prince wouldn't be impossible for Charlotte, the Imperial Princess, either.

So there was a good chance for Charlotte to also possess a talent, enabling her to enter the Royal Class. However, even if she was first ranked, was her talent inferior as she was in Class B?

Or.

Did they intentionally separate these two? Both of them were in the position that corresponded to the leaders of Class A and B.

No one knew about their circumstances, but I did.

Bertus obviously had great talent, but it wasn't the number one talent. Even though he was fit for Class A, he actually should have been in the third or fourth spot if they really only considered his talent.

His power intervened in this decision.

Strictly speaking, it was the judgment of the faculty that if the Prince were to enter the Royal Class and ended up in the third or fourth seat, they might end up going against Bertus for nothing.

It was difficult for power to influence this place, but there was no place that couldn't be influenced by it somehow. There were people who knew how to bootlick no matter where one went. In the first place, it was just an implicit rule to line up according to one's room number, not a written one. So Bertus didn't really have the number one talent, but just the number one position.

So what was going on with Charlotte? I wasn't sure if she became number one of Class B because of her talent or because some faculty member or even someone higher up. I had no idea if there were instructions behind this.

However, the result was presented in front of us.

The semester that was about to start would be far from the pleasant school life I had planned.

"Welcome to Temple's Royal Class!"

–*Clap, clap, clap, clap.*

All the plans I made for the future had collapsed and the fight between Charlotte de Gardias and Bertus de Gardias was about inevitable.

And here I was in Class A.

I was on Bertus de Gardias' side.

"Did you say your name was Reinhardt? Let's do our best together!"

The guy standing next to me spoke to me. Even if I didn't look at him, I knew exactly who he was. Since we all introduced ourselves already. However, even if he didn't introduce himself I would have known.

B-11, the one that was originally supposed to be number 10.

This was the historic moment of the last ranked of Class A and B meeting.

"……Okay."

You would do just fine on your own, the problem is me, you shitty main character.

* * *

Two people were added that originally weren't supposed to be here. One was me and the other was Charlotte.

The story had already gone awry right at the start. It was like there were actually two writers to this story, the other making every change I made fit the narrative.

That was probably how I even ended up having to fight the one I risked my life for at the side of the one who tried to kill me.

Except for that short exchange I had, we didn't have to do something as troublesome as talking with these 100 plus students. The reception ended after everyone introduced themselves and everyone applauded.

The student council president then announced the rules of the Royal Class to us.

"Those friends who have already received elementary and secondary education at Temple would know these things, but there are some among you who have just transferred here to the higher education division, so I shall explain."

"First of all, all students of Temple are equals, the Royal Class isn't an exception. All your classmates are to be treated the same. There are no ranks in Temple, except the relationship between upperclassmen and lowerclassmen. Wherever you came from, whether you're a noble, part of a royal family or even the Imperial Family. If we start looking at lineage like that, Temple wouldn't be able to operate like that, right?"

It wasn't a policy that came into existence because every student no matter where they came from had the right to a fair education and as such should be treated equally or something.

It was made because Temple's system would become ridiculously complicated if they had to look into every student's lineage. There were kids coming from all over the continent after all.

It would be possible to educate commoners, nobles, royalty and the Imperial Family

separately, but things wouldn't end there. The nobles would say things like: "I'm a duke so how could I be placed in the same class as the mere son of a baron?" and the royal families would go on to say: "How could I be placed in the same class as the prince of such a lowly kingdom?".

There would be no end, if it were decided to separate the students based on lineage. There were just too many people coming here for that. Status brought identity with it, so even among the students of similar status, there would be tens of hundreds of class divisions, to the point students wouldn't even be able to study properly, grouped together based on their lineages and said things like: "You and I cannot eat together, your presence alone is insulting.", to each other.

So Temple had this rule of students to not reveal their status in school, not because they cared that much about the students' rights and interests or tried to prohibit discrimination. If people starting arguing about lineage, Temple wouldn't even be able to exist in the first place.

Of course, this might be a bit difficult for people of very high status.

So those guys might not even come here.

Or they joined because of the connections, knowledge and recognition they would gain by graduating from Temple.

There were still people who would reveal their status at Temple and tried to take advantage of others even after being warned a few times, eventually they would get expelled. Members of the Imperial Family weren't an exception. It might be a bit shameful for the people of the Imperial Family, who were far up in terms of lineage, to have their children expelled after creating such a mess, but the Empire rather welcomed that. It served as another example of the fairness and greatness of Temple to every single person of the continent.

As I mentioned before, Temple was a place that brought in a lot of money, and sometimes money is everything in the world.

The student council president, Ceres van Owen, who was in front of me was also the rightful heiress to a Royal Family of a Principality located in the southern part of the Empire, although I couldn't even remember what the name of her country was anymore. Judging by her name, I thought it must have been called something like

Owenia. Now that she was about to graduate from the Royal Class, she was sure to be greatly welcomed back when she returned home.

Still, Imperial Family members of the Empire came to Temple, what was more these two were potential candidates to become the next emperor, and she just casually told them not to reveal their true identities and to get along with everyone.

That's the Gardias Temple for you.

It wasn't like there were any cases where someone retaliated later on for what happened at Temple, but these guys would get heavily criticized. Well, put simply, all personal resentments created in Temple should be buried in Temple. That was this school's rule.

Of course, that also included romantic relationships. It wasn't uncommon for a noble or someone of a royal family to fall in love with someone and then pretended not to know them or straight up ran away from their lover after graduating.

"The rank you have outside of Temple is completely useless in here. You can act like a military god outside of Temple as much as you want, but if I ever see any of you do this on campus, I will have to give you a warning using the authority given to me as the student council president. If you have accumulated warnings beyond a certain amount, a faculty meeting will be held, where the disciplinary action taken against you will be decided upon. Don't even think for a second that everything will end in expulsion. In some cases it might lead to diplomatic problems or jail time. If that is the case, keep in mind that you are to be punished by the special law that Temple students are subjected to, and not according to your original status. Of course, you might have been granted immunity as each country has different laws, but you should keep in mind this won't apply in these situations. If you force your classmates to call you in a specific way or tell them that just looking in your eyes is seen as an insult would hardly make you seem like the one in the right here."

The president and vice-president had the authority to interfere with the students.

If it was inside Temple, even if they were the heir to the throne, if they did something against the rules, they would be scolded by the president.

Of course, they could get revenge against them because they felt offended, however, if the Imperial Family started interfering with the affairs of students at Temple, it

would not only be childish, but it would also seriously tarnish Temple's honor, which was the Empire's source of enormous income and a landmark.

Therefore, these two would faithfully follow Temple's rules. If they were to brandish their authority and power here, ignoring all the rules, it would just be like spitting in their own faces.

Temple was the Empire's face along with the Imperial Family after all. Throwing insults into one's own face was pretty inefficient.

"Another important thing. Do not intentionally drag what happened outside of Temple inside of it."

"For example, using the various privileges that Temple students receive to commit crimes outside and then escape to Temple."

"We don't know and don't care if any of you were enemies outside of Temple or if there's some feud going on between your families. Temple is an educational institution, not a political arena. Competitiveness in good faith is permitted, but if you use unfair or unreasonable means or if external powers or forces intervene in these matters, the student concerned will be expelled and will be subject to numerous responsibilities."

In other words, don't drag outside powers into Temple. In the end, all these things she was telling us were more or less directed at Charlotte and Bertus.

Everyone was secretly guessing that this would definitely play a part in the struggle for imperial power.

"Also, there is a message from the Imperial Family Gardias. Originally, this wasn't allowed, but this situation is somewhat special in many ways, so I will read it out to you."

Yet another thing that hadn't existed before sprung into existence.

The student council president opened a letter and read it out to us.

"From the moment this letter is read out, if any problems arise with either Charlotte de Gardias or Bertus de Gardias, both inside and outside of Temple, even if it is just a simple accident, the other party's rights to the throne will be permanently deprived.

Emperor Neliod de Gardias, Grand Admiral."

The student council president turned the letter over and showed us that the seal of the Imperial Family properly stamped on it.

The Emperor blocked any future attempts for them to assassinate each other.

There was a reason why the two of them were pushed into the same place in Temple just when the conflict over the succession to the throne was expected to intensify.

Now that the Emperor's power seemed to pierce through the sky due to the victory in the Demon World War, his words held more authority than ever. In fact, the Emperor was the most powerful one since the founding of the Empire. That was the price he received in exchange for the hostages' lives.

Now the Emperor could even appoint a completely weak member of the Imperial Family who had no real authority or base as the successor.

That's why he was telling the two most influential successors to not think about hurting each other, but rather protect each other no matter what.

They should win the Imperial Power through fair competition.

Nelliod de Gardias, the current Emperor, was an unprecedentedly powerful Emperor who could make such ridiculous demands.

It was as if he was telling them: "Don't even think about trying to commit the perfect crime, because even if your opponent dies because of an accident, your right of succession would be void.". Only this Emperor, who had the most power in the history of mankind due to his victory in the Demon World War, was able to place such an absurd condition.

The letter wasn't only addressed towards Bertus and Charlotte.

It was to all the students, faculty and the followers of Charlotte and Bertus who might be among them.

From the Emperor's words, both Bertus and Charlotte should have realized that they should value the life of their opponent as much as their own.

I couldn’t see what kind of facial expression those two were wearing.

Anyway, I was really grateful.

I wasn’t sure about Charlotte, but that Bertus guy would definitely cause bloodshed, in the near future at least.

CHAPTER 27

There's the rule that all students had to treat each other equally, and the authority, power and status one had outside was meaningless in Temple.

"Tha, that's…… Yo, your Grace…?"

"Come on, you should talk to me comfortably. It's the rule here to treat everyone equally."

However, this rule was rather tricky to implement for lower ranking people…

Could you just talk comfortably to a Prince just because he asked you to?

- *In the past when we went to Temple, you sure were talking casually to me, haha.*
- *You were telling me to do so after all, hahaha.*
- *Do I look so easy to you?*

They were afraid to someday hold this kind of conversation.

Of course, Bertus wasn't that kind of character, but rather, it was just the lower class getting intimidated by his presence.

After that, the student council president informed us about the general rules and told us to refer to the manual if we had further questions.

It was mostly about the curfew, meal time, items that could and could not be brought in and when to wake up. Just some little things. We were warned not to wander around after lights out. Of course, it was possible to go out if necessary, but we were told to prepare for a scolding by the superintendent if they found out.

'Since the superintendents have a lifetime contract with Temple, if you don't have enough power to influence even the Temple staff, you'd better wake up on time.'

They even gave us that kind of dreadful warning.

Temple was fully prepared to even counter act their teachers being weighed down by their students' authority and couldn't do their jobs as teachers properly.

In the lobby on the left, the students that met each other for the first time today got together and talked with each other. I sat slightly further away and overheard what they were talking about.

Bertus was a hidden villain to begin with. At the start, guys with a hot temper were the ones who started arguing with Class B. Bertus originally appeared as a good guy in Class A. He was amiable, didn't discriminate against others and was kind to everyone in Class B.

He even hid the fact that he was a prince. He hid his identity and just enrolled into Temple's Royal Class as an outstanding student. He later revealed his true identity and character to the main character! That was how I set it up.

But now, because of Charlotte's admittance his identity was already known. In other words, the development I had previously planned out disappeared like smoke.

Even so, it wouldn't change the bigger framework of this academy setting. Going to classes, studying and training. Although the development would be different, the structure would be the same.

"Take it easy, take it easy. If you don't, I might be the one who gets a warning, you know? Aren't you worried about that?"

"Ah, Uh, uhm… Yes, I am…"

Bertus was telling the students who had a hard time dealing with him to treat him comfortably, while teasing them slightly, just like I set him up to be.

Class A, which consisted of 11 people, did not use different dormitories for men and women. Temple focused more on dividing the inferior and superior students than on dividing male and female ones.

Right now, the person asking the Prince about various things was number 9 Erich de Lafaeri, the son of Count Lafaeri. I couldn't remember if he had talent in divine power, swordsmanship or something else, but it must be a talent suited for a Paladin.

As an aspiring paladin, I set him up to be a shallow guy. Strong against the weak and weak against the strong. Typical.

He was the one who despised Class B the most. He was also the prince's lackey.

Ah.

I feel like someone spoiled me here, because I already knew these developments in advance. That feeling of knowing someone's inner thought was both a good one and a bitter one.

"Have you ever been to Lafaerie? Oh, of course, you haven't been there before…"

"Ah, Lafaerie, it's the great territory in the Northwest. I've never been to it before, but I know it produces good grapes. I can't drink yet, but I know because the Emperor likes to drink wine from Lafaerie."

"O, oooh! You know!"

Erich was almost moved to tears just because the prince knew about his territory.

Although I didn't find that matter all that moving, Bertus' ability to commit anything he saw to memory and to recall any of these things at will sure was amazing.

Bertus smiled innocently.

"As a matter of fact, I had a few sips without the Emperor's knowledge."

"Ah, re, really?"

"It had a good feeling to. I'm sorry I can't remember too clearly."

"No, no! No! Tha, thank you! B, by the way, you did it wi, without… You did it without the Emperor knowing…?"

"I'm not that much different from you, you know? I also do things I want to do secretly behind my parents' back. Then if I get caught I get scolded."

What a ghoulish bastard.

It was so absurd watching Bertus make his first slave in real time right in front of me. After talking for a long while, Bertus got up and approached someone. They came down to the lobby, wiping down their hair with a towel as if they just came out of the shower.

“Hello?”

“……Huh. You got business with me?”

“Don’t you want to get to know your classmates a bit more? I’m Bertus. Nice to meet you. I saw you earlier, you were rank 2, right?”

“…Yeah.”

“I just wanted to introduce myself formally.”

A girl with black hair and eyes. Even though this was the first time I saw her, I knew exactly who she was.

“Ellen.”

The girl tried to walk past Bertus as soon as she said that.

“Huh? That’s it?”

“……”

“I know you.”

Bertus smiled bashfully and extended his hand to her.

“I heard about it. Don’t worry.”

The girl that introduced herself as Ellen looked at Bertus before she held his hand.

“I’m sorry. Of course, you were supposed to be number 1. I guess there were some people meddling. I really wanted to apologize to you for taking your place.”

Bertus spoke as if he knew something about Ellen.

"……I don't care."

After Ellen said that she brushed away her hair and walked towards the restaurant.

"Hey, did you hear?… She was supposed to be number 1…"

"Yeah. Right."

A girl who was supposed to be number 1 got pushed down to number 2 because of Bertus.

She introduced herself as just Ellen, but Bertus knew that the girl was hiding something.

Of course, I also knew as it was part of the main story.

What she hid was her real name. Her last name to be exact.

Ellen Artorius.

She was the sister of the Warrior Artorius.

* * *

Ellen Artorius.

If Bertus was the villain who had slightly better talents than the main character, then Ellen Artorius was a powerhouse that the main character couldn't even dare look at.

As such, she was the main character's real rival.

Although she fell to Class A's second rank, she actually possessed such tremendous amounts of talent that just calling her first rank wasn't enough.

She had a lot of talents I couldn't clearly remember. Things like weapon mastery, magic domination, magic resistance, spiritual sensitivity, psychic resistance, fast-learning and many more.

She was a genius and good at everything.

She was the beneficiary of that set up.

That was why Ellen hid her vast amounts of talents from outsiders. It wasn't an ordinary number of talents after all.

If I had infinite aptitudes, then Ellen was born with every type of combat talent there is, though it wasn't infinite.

If Swordsmanship was a talent for just one type of weapon, then Weapon Mastery would be a type of comprehensive talent. It meant that one had a talent for all types of weapons. Even if she just had a talent for a single weapon and an additional one she would have been able to enter Royal Class, but counting Ellen's talents was just a meaningless task.

She had so many talents that no one could match her in the class of warriors. In addition to her magic resistance she had one more resistance that no one except Ellen had. She had the talent to develop a resistance against supernatural powers.

To begin with, I made her as a character that felt like a mountain the main character could never over look, so of course she was a Munchkin. As was etiquette in these types of novels, the main character would eventually rise to a level comparable to Ellen Artorius.

Bertus was watching the leaving figure of that Ellen, who didn't seem to care much about him. Erich watched her with an expression as if he wanted to say something like: "What? How dare you ignore His Grace?!"

I heard all their names during that self-introduction, however, even though I was the one who set up their names, honestly, I still couldn't remember all of them.

What did that guy do again? What were his abilities?

There were so many characters and it wasn't like this was the last novel I wrote about the Demon King's death, so I couldn't help but forget.

Bertus greeted each and every one of us in the lobby as if he was trying to get acquainted with us, I was no exception in this.

While Bertus was talking, I again tried to recall the faces and names of the remaining people.

“I think you were called Reinhardt. Right?”

“Ah. Yes.”

“Let’s do well together, my friend.”

It seemed like we already had too bad of a relationship though to become friends, but, well, that wasn’t a reason to act too unfriendly.

The one I had to be on guard the most about wasn’t Bertus after all. I had to be careful not to let Charlotte know who I was. Bertus didn’t know anyway.

I had some guesses about Charlotte entering the school, but I was actually pretty surprised that it actually happened.

I had to be careful not to stand out too much. Even though Charlotte didn’t know for certain that I was a demon, she did know that I was suspicious. That’s what I noticed before I fled without a word.

I was certainly uncomfortable with the idea of having to be in the same class as Bertus, but it was a lot more dangerous to be in Charlotte’s class. I was glad that I got into Class A.

It was that…

It was about time for that to happen.

“Hey, guys! Nice to meet you!”

A guy approached Class A’s lobby with a lively expression on his face.

“Let’s get along in the future!”

The one ranked last in Class B and the main character, Ludwig, was coming towards the lobby.

* * *

Technically, the A and B Class dormitories weren’t off limits to the other class.

It was more like an unwritten rule, so someone heading to the other class's dormitory didn't happen often. Even more so as the grades went up.

That was because Class A clearly perceived Class B as inferior and Class B was also uncomfortable with or rather they disliked Class A.

In fact, as one went up in grade, there wasn't even a way for class members to go back and forth between the two. In some cases, Class B was able to overtake Class A by working hard, but that just added to the annoyance of Class A.

Of course, this was the first day everyone here joined the Royal Class, but those who have attended Temple since elementary school had heard about these facts.

Therefore, it wasn't that unreasonable for the people in Class A's lobby to look at Ludwig, who came to Temple for the first time today and proudly introduced himself as Class B's number 11, with an expression seeming to ask 'What's with that bastard?'.

That was the event that took place right after the self-introduction after entering the dormitories.

Ludwig just stopped by Class A to say hello, but was met with rather bitter reactions.

There were five people in the lobby right now.

I, Bertus, No. 9 Erich, No. 10 Cayer Vioden, No. 4 Harriet de Saint-Owan.

Except for me and Bertus, everyone was frowning at him. Ludwig then readily reached out his hand to Bertus.

"It's an honor, Prince! Let's do our best together!"

"Okay, Ludwig. Don't call me Prince. That's against the rules."

"Yes! Bertus!"

Bertus smiled kindly and took his hand. Everyone looked at that scene with even more astonishment. It's like witnessing a friendship that only had a 1% chance of happening, happening right in front of their eyes.

The prince had a good personality as well.

I felt like I could hear voices saying that from everywhere. After shaking hands with Bertus, Ludwig greeted the other children as well.

“Oh, we meet again, Reinhardt”

“Indeed.”

“Let’s do our best!”

“Oh, you too.”

Let’s not stand out. Let’s just show a neutral reaction.

Erich shook hands with Ludwig, even though he was quite speechless. No. 10 Cayer just sighed in astonishment and took his hand.

“…Hey, get out of here.”

“Huh?”

“Get out of here. This is the Class A dormitory.”

However, No. 4 Harriet de Saint-Owan was blunt with Ludwig.

“Ah, so… I, I can’t come here?”

Ludwig seemed embarrassed as he said that. Harriet sighed.

“I don’t know about you not being allowed here.”

Harriet sighed again and pointed at the hallway Ludwig entered through.

“But it feels bad. Some B Class person just wandering in and out of the A Class housing.”

“……Ah, ah…”

“If you understand, just go away already.”

“Ah… Ri, right. I’m sorry…”

Ludwig turned back with a puzzled expression.

“Come now. Aren’t we all the same friends here?”

Bertus appeared to rescue Ludwig from trouble. Harriet’s face turned beet-red as she hadn’t expected Bertus would step up.

“Ah, tha… That’s… Ah…”

Her bewilderment, fumbling for words, was a stark contrast to her previous venomous look she sent out before. I guess she never thought the prince would cover for that guy.

Harriet de Saint-Owan.

Princess of the Duchy Saint-Owan. As the princess of one of the Empire’s duchies she had to make a good impression on the Prince.

That guy was a commoner without a surname and he boldly dared to come here as a B Class student, so she got annoyed and lost her temper, however when Bertus stepped in she got very quiet.

Bertus, of course, didn't reveal that he was a prince in the original, but he overwhelmed her with his atmosphere.

It was amazing how the initial development was the same, even though some things changed.

"Ludwig, we have some sensitive friends here, so let's be more careful in the future. If you have something to say to us, you can use the pager and if you don't know how to use it, I'll show you."

"O, oh. Ehm… Thank you."

Bertus walked out of the lobby with a grinning, but slightly dazed Ludwig. Harriet's face was still red and she couldn't bring out a single word.

She usually lived with her nose in the air, so she completely forgot that there was a Prince next to her. She only pretended to be calm, after all she only heard of Temple and this was her first day here.

By the way, was it so scary to suddenly see someone from Class B here? Well, anyway even though she was kind of a jerk, she was still ranked fourth.

Her main talent was 'Magic'.

If Weapon Mastery was a comprehensive talent, then 'Magic' was of the same type.

There was a person in Class B who had the two magical talents 'Alchemy' and 'Enchantment'. In comparison, that girl's comprehensive talent, Magic, was a huge upgrade to the talent the person from Class B had.

In any case, she was gifted with the ability to be able to master all types of magic, regardless of school or field. She wasn't 4th ranked for nothing. Of course, knowing that there were still 3 more people above her was amazing in itself.

"The Prince has a very good personality…"

Erich was admiring him, calling Bertus Prince again without realizing.

"Don't you think?"

Erich looked at me as if he was asking me to agree. Originally, he was supposed to ask someone else, wasn't he?

"……Yeah."

Looking at it like that, no matter how rotten he was on the inside, he did seem to have a good personality on the outside. Even I who knew his true colors couldn't believe it.

He was so good at pretending that he could even deceive me, the creator.

That was quite the thing.

[You have accomplished the achievement 'First day at Temple'.]

[You have earned 100 achievement points.]

I didn't know if it was because I saw the event with Ludwig or if this was a reward for safely passing the day, but I received some achievement points.

CHAPTER 28

I was returning to my room.

Getting involved in major events, such as just now with Ludwig, seemed to earn me achievement points. Of course, regardless of that, I knew that I could earn some by completing challenges such as 'Slap the Emperor in the Face'…

But wasn't that just a bit unfair?

I got 100 points for surviving and overcoming the risk of death, and yet I got 100 points just because Ludwig was getting humiliated in the same place I was at? Wasn't that completely insane?

Were they telling me that my life was on the same level as Ludwig getting called a dog?

While I was musing over the amount of achievement points earned, no message popped up. I guessed they must have their own rules. Just thinking about that made me feel tired.

Most of the main story took place in Class B and its dormitory or classroom, so Class A could almost be considered a vestige of the main story. That meant, it was mostly filled with things I was unfamiliar with.

When I returned to my room, I filled out the blank name spaces based on the names I heard in the self-introduction.

Class 1-A.

I couldn't remember all their talents. There were also some people I completely forgot.

1 – Bertus de Gardias (Swordmaster, Villain)

2 – Ellen Artorius (Munchkin)

3 – Marianna de Grantz (Electrokinesis)

4 – Harriet de Saint-Owan (Magic)

5 – Cliffman (Something having to do with close quarter combat.)

6 – Heinrich von Schwarz (Pyrokinesis)

7 – Adelia (Something on the Magic side)

8 – Kono Lint (Teleportation)

9 – Erich de Lafaeri (Lackey 1, somehow will become Paladin?)

10 – Cayer Voiden (Lackey 2, early game villain. Can't remember more.)

11 – Me

And Class B.

1 – Charlotte de Gardias (Unknown)

2 – Louis Ancton (Smart. Nerd)

3 – Scarlet (Supernatural power, immune to magic.)

4 – Ashir (Divine power… Probably?)

5 – Christina (Alchemy, Enchantment.)

6 – Anna de Gerna (Black magic, not a bad girl.)

7 – Ibia (Telepathy)

8 – Destomolian (Witchcraft, Supernatural power, savage bastard.)

9 – Delphine Izadra (Archery)

10 – Lanian Sessor (Music)

11 – Ludwig (Stamina, munchkin pretending to be weak, main character)

Although I didn't have any detailed knowledge about a lot of the talents, I was roughly able to sort things out, as hearing their names kind of made me remember some things.

Who I had to remember weren't the original main characters anyway. Most of the people I would run into were the Class A kids.

Anyway, unlike in the original, Charlotte and I were added, so there were 22 students.

Among them I had not a single clue what talent Charlotte had. What kind of talent would she have? Don't tell me it's the same as Bertus'? Since they were family, there was a good chance that they might have the same talents.

However, now wasn't the time to deal with Charlotte.

I got 100 points for escaping the Demon King's Castle.

Then I earned 1000 points for saving Charlotte.

After that I used 'A Writer's Advice' twice, spending 150 points each, so 300 points.

And just then I got 100 points as a reward.

I had a total of 900 achievement points available to me.

To give myself a talent with achievement points, I needed at least 1000 points.

[Swordsmanship – 1000 Points]

[Archery – 1000 Points]

[Magic Sensitivity – 1000 Points]

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.

.

In fact, this was an incredible ability. Bertus had to endure enormous pain undergoing that huge procedure to acquire three talents. However, I could just get talents by using achievement points.

Of course, achievement point costs would be subject to change.

Maybe after I get my first talent, the second one might be more expensive. It was a pity that I didn't know how expensive they would get.

If I get 100 more points, I would be able to get my first talent, unless the prices suddenly changed.

There were obviously some incredibly powerful talents. For example, those comprehensive talents.

[Weapon Mastery – 10000 Points]

[Magic – 20000 Points]

One of Ellen's many talents, Weapon Mastery, required 10000 Points, and Harriet's Magic required 20000 Points. I could save up my points and then put them into one of those talents, but who knew how many years it would take until I got that many points saved up. I wasn't even sure if the price would still be the same at that time.

When swordsmanship reached its peak, there were some cases where it evolved into Weapon Mastery, but what was with this?

And Weapon Mastery and magic, swordsmanship included, could only create enormous synergy if there were other talents supporting them. Most of them had to be backed by magic related talents.

In the case of Magic, even if one had that talent, one couldn't learn any if one didn't possess magic sensitivity, magic aptitude and, most importantly, a great deal of intelligence.

I wanted to become a wizard the most. It was safe and powerful.

However, would I be able to master the science of magic filled with technical terms

that would make my head spin? Even if my talents for magic were fully developed, there was a strong possibility that I wasn't able to understand the science behind it.

Or could I become a wizard after I upgraded my brain by getting learning-related talents? I'd love to have a talent that would make me smarter, but…

Under the premise that I want to become a wizard, I would need at least four lesser talents to meet the requirements. One talent for the corresponding magic system, magic sensitivity, mana control and brain reinforcement.

It would be nice to get all that before I die of old age.

In the end, there was only one answer.

A Supernatural ability.

Supernatural powers could exert their strength with only one talents. A-3 had Electrokinesis and A-6 had Pyrokinesis.

However, there was a problem with supernatural abilities.

At a lower level, the abilities were either too weak or not controllable. In other words, it was difficult to make use of them whenever one needed them. Therefore, those who used supernatural powers had to develop them through continuous training and control. Just like others had to do swordsmanship training or magic research.

But in the end, it would be better to dig the well early than uselessly dream of becoming a wizard by saving hard on my achievement points of which I didn't know when I would get some.

Swordsmanship could evolve into Weapon Mastery and if one studied various schools of magic, those who originally didn't have the Magic talent could develop it.

Some talents evolved. Especially supernatural abilities tended to do so. The reason for that was, as one became able to control one's ability and one's understanding of it deepend, one could discover the hidden aspects of the ability.

A-3, who utilizes electricity, would later be able to use a power stronger than what she was able to use now, and A-6, who used flames, would later be able to ignite

things without combustion…

If I were to buy a talent using my achievement points it should be something one wouldn't be able to obtain through normal means. With all my aptitudes, I could just acquire those normal talents by doing some repetitive training. The problem was that I didn't know how long it would take though.

Supernatural powers couldn't be obtained through effort, regardless of one's inadequacies or aptitudes. However, I could buy supernatural powers with my achievement points.

It might not be useful right away, but it had a strong potential for growth.

So, there was no other option for me other than supernatural powers.

So which supernatural power should I choose…? At the lowest level it wouldn't be of much help anyway.

I had to decide based on future developments.

It was quite funny that I was planning away the 100 achievement points I hadn't even received yet.

Let's go to sleep.

* * *

On the next day was the entrance ceremony. The entrance ceremony was held for children who had entered the higher education course in Temples gigantic square. The sight of more than 10000 students having their entrance ceremony here was truly breathtaking.

Setting up that there was an entrance ceremony itself seemed like a pretty unreasonable move on my part. When one gathered tens of thousands of children in one place, it would naturally create some world chattering noise.

However, the Royal Class' entrance ceremony was held separately.

The reason for that seemed to be to make the Royal Class children focus on their work rather than get dragged to some large scale events. I didn't even bother

explaining that bit.

Come to think of it. making those other kids uncomfortable while giving us this comfort seemed pretty much like discrimination, didn't it? They basically put on some frivolous show, making the other students quite exhausted, while they kept the privileged away from it.

That's how it was.

I felt my face turn red in embarrassment at how carelessly I wrote these things. It was an entrance ceremony for only 22 students, so the procedure was rather simple. Even with the Prince and Princess there, it didn't seem much different.

The attendance ended with the introduction of the general teachers of the Royal Class, that is, the principal and the people who will be in charge of us in the future.

Then we were led to the class building dedicated to the Royal Class close to the dormitories and were told to sit in our classroom. That fast pace wasn't all that bad.

Class A's homeroom teacher, Epinhauser.

Unlike Class B's homeroom teacher, Mr. Mustrang, he had a very business-like, cold personality.

He was looking at us with a stiff expression on his face. He was that type of person that thought he was the only smart guy in the room, so he was treating us no different from ordinary students.

"On Mondays and Thursdays, we will have a common class in this classroom."

"On Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays, you can take the classes you requested. The lecture list and their outlines are all written on the document distributed. Students who do not know how to proceed, come to me separately. You might not know which classes to take."

"You children have great talent, but do not be fooled into thinking that you are geniuses in every field. What I'm meaning to say is, don't try to take classes you won't be able to understand yet."

"No. 1, you shall be the temporary class leader. If you want to replace your class

leader, report to me after you do. Most things I have to tell you will be communicated through No. 1."

He didn't even call the Prince by his name and some of the students were rather taken aback at how casually he referred to him, but Bertus didn't seem to care.

"Also, if you believe I might be of help with any grievances, problems or quarrel, please ask for help."

"And, if there is a big fight, call me immediately, and while I wish to prevent any student from getting killed as much as possible, I cannot say that it never happened. So that you can be more cautious of each other, you have to know each other's talents, so we created a list. Check it out later."

Mr. Epinhauser was muttering some words with bloody content quite casually, like a narration. Someone raised their hand at that cruel closing remark.

"What would happen if you page a teacher when there's a big fight?"

No. 8, Kono Lint. He probably was curious. I knew the reason he asked as well.

If we were to fight among ourselves , would that be a problem that could just be resolved by getting a teacher involved?

That seemed to be his question. It kind of showed his confidence orrather arrogance.

Mr. Epinhauser seemed familiar with that question as well.

"You are under special supervision and valuable talents of the Empire, but you may also hold the power to endanger yourself and others."

Mr. Epinhauser explained calmly.

"As a teacher of the Royal Class, I have the authority to take emergency measures in case something like that were to happen."

"Emergency?"

"It means that if the situation is not favorable, the student can be promptly disposed of."

Those words chilled the atmosphere in the classroom.

This place only held precious people with great talent.

And here someone was, standing right before them, telling them, if something goes wrong, he can kill them. He spoke calmly as if what he just said was a matter of course.

“Are you capable of that?”

No. 10, Cayer Vioden remarked rather sarcastically. Mr Epinhauser didn’t react much to that obvious sarcasm.

“I’ve been doing this for 10 years now.”

This time no one dared to say anything sarcastically again.

No, well, they probably were scared because they were kids.

But why was I also scared? Why? Was I too old? Did I maybe grow soft? Was it because this was just too cruel? Can a teacher even do that?

Contrary to that atmosphere.

-Wahahahaha!

One could hear laughter from the next classroom. It was Class B.

“Then I hope you have understood my words and be careful.”

However, there was no laughter to be found in Class A.

“And No. 11.”

Huh?

“You follow me.”

Huh? Me? Why so suddenly?

I didn't really expect that development, you know?

Teacher?

* * *

The classroom building for common education was built right next to the Royal Class' dormitory, so there was no need to go around the entire Temple on the days of common education.

About 100 students were getting educated there, but the building was slightly smaller than other Temple buildings. There, not only teachers, but also faculty and other personnel were second only in number to the students.

…However, I just set it up like that, I actually had no idea what they were doing.

There were dozens of people in the first year teacher's office, excluding the homeroom teacher. I wasn't sure if all of them were teachers, but I was pretty sure that the other year's teacher's offices looked the same.

Certainly, the number of students and staff should be about equal or even greater.

Mr. Epinhauser took me to his private room and instructed me to sit down in front of him.

I felt like a patient who just came to the hospital after being diagnosed with a serious illness waiting for some bad news.

I wasn't really sure, but I felt like I was in some sort of trouble.

He rummaged through some papers and talked to me without looking at me.

"No. 11, Reinhardt."

"Yea- Yes."

He looked at me calmly.

"You have a lot of aptitudes, but no talent, correct?"

“Ah, that… Yes.”

Why was he talking to me as if I was a beggar?

He was cruel and cold-hearted, but I didn’t set him up to be human trash, though?

“What classes are you going to take?”

“……Yes?”

Something completely unexpected came out of Epinhauser’s mouth. He put a document down in front of me. Each student’s profile was organized there.

The document he presented to me was the profile of No. 3, Marianna de Grantz.

“No.3, Grantz, a holder of supernatural powers.”

“……Yes.”

What about it? He rummaged through the papers and showed me another page.

“This is No. 5.”

“……Yes.”

“Cliffman is a Combat talent.”

“Yes.”

So what? While I was having such thoughts while looking at him, Mr. Epinhauser was just staring at me silently. His eyes were scary.

So there were people in this world that could scold someone with just their eyes.

“Students with supernatural powers usually sign up for special lectures on meditation and psychic control. There aren’t many with supernatural abilities, so they need specialized lectures like that.”

“Yeah, I guess so.”

“You don’t have to take any of those lectures through, now do you, No. 11?”

“Yeah… Well.”

I didn’t know about later, but I didn’t think I needed to take them for now.

“Cliffman is a combat talent. It is rather rare. Hand to Hand Combat, Gladiator, Martial Arts, Archery… They say it encompasses all kinds of combat talents.”

“Yes.”

He showed talent in everything to do with the way of battle. Cliffman only had one talent, but in terms of just that one talent, it was a comprehensive talent far superior to Weapon Mastery.

“No. 5 who is a combat talent, will take lectures centered on physical training, weapon skills and sparring. Do you agree?”

“Yes.”

Oh man, I now knew what he was talking about.

“Your other classmates have a set direction how they want to specialize. They roughly know what they need to learn and what classes to take.”

“Yes.”

“But No. 11, you have aptitudes in all fields, but nothing you excel in.”

I knew he wasn’t trying to scold me, but I sure felt like he was.

“You probably have no idea what you need to learn. Correct?”

He seemed to think that I needed help.

CHAPTER 29

He was a teacher. Most students had specific aptitudes and talents, so one didn't have to tell them what they had to study. It was his job to just look over the list of courses the students chose and give a few words.

However, from his point of view, it would be the first time having a student like me. A weird student who could do everything but wasn't specifically good at anything.

"You can do anything within the curriculum supported by Temple. However if you try to do everything, you would gain nothing."

So, Epinhauser brought me to the teacher's office in case I would get overly greedy and tried to do something absurd. To prevent a situation like me trying to learn everything but ending up with nothing.

What a good teacher.

"Aptitude and talent did not always determine if it was suitable for one or not. I've seen people who had a talent in magic but absolutely hated magic, and there were people who had great talent in swordsmanship, but would immediately faint as soon as a sword got pointed at them."

A talent for swordsmanship didn't automatically give one fighting spirit, and a talent for magic didn't automatically give one the desire to research and explore magic.

That's what one might call the blind spot of talent.

Mr. Epinhauser was already telling me a problem that would only occur after the beginning part.

In the end, what was important was one's own mentality, one's interest in it and if one could apply it in practice. If one were forced to train in a certain field because one found a talent in you early on, one might come to loath that talent itself and one might just end up collapsing in a situation where one's life is at stake.

What good would being talented in swordsmanship do, if you were afraid of violence

itself?

That's what he meant.

"So, you are better off than those guys at least. You don't have to force yourself to do anything because you don't have a talent that's restricting you. You can do whatever you want."

Eventually, he asked me what I wanted to do. I decided on that yesterday.

"I want to learn about supernatural powers."

"……"

For the first time today, his face showed some emotions.

He was clearly pitying me.

He looked at my profile and remained silent for a while.

"I heard that you have so many aptitudes that it just got shortened to a single line."

They weren't able to write all my aptitudes down on paper. That was why they just summed it up in a single line: 'Has aptitudes in all fields'. If they actually tried to document all of them, they'd waste a huge amount of paper.

"Do you also have aptitude for supernatural abilities?"

"Maybe?"

Maybe I had it or maybe I didn't, I couldn't really explain it to him.

"So, let's just say you do, how do you plan on awakening such supernatural powers?"

"…By trying my best?"

I couldn't exactly tell him that I could use achievement points to awaken them, so I said that, but that kind of made him look at me as if I was trying to break a rock with an egg.

“Isn’t there anything else you want to focus on other than supernatural powers? Put simply, people who do not have supernatural abilities cannot attend those special lectures.”

“I can’t?”

“……It’s a bit different for students of Royal Class, but the teacher in charge will find that very strange. There might also be the possibility that they will kick you out.”

I nodded and told him that I would bear the full responsibility if I would get kicked out.

He agonized for a long time and eventually began to write something down on a paper.

“Apply for this class, I will inform the teacher separately.”

He seemed to think that I should realize on my own what nonsense I was trying to do.

“Instead, we shall keep it at a single lecture.”

He wrote down this and that, saying that he would not introduce any other supernatural power-related lectures to me.

After writing some things down in a flash he handed me the paper.

“This is your schedule for the semester. If you put anything else in it, I will not accept it.”

Apparently he made a schedule for me instead.

“What lectures are these?”

“Rather than just focusing on that single subject, I’d like you to do it like this. You’ll be able to find something fitting.”

He told me I could do anything I wanted at first.

When he realized that I wanted to focus on something as bizarre as supernatural

powers, he asked me to choose something I'd like to do other than that. So rather than spending this semester on just supernatural powers, he told me I should try other lectures as well to find something I liked. It was common sense that it was impossible to awaken supernatural powers just through effort.

In other words, that was the right judgement here, so I couldn't say anything against it.

* * *

It went without saying that just joining all the supernatural power classes wasn't a good idea. In fact, it might not be possible for me to fill the entire semester with just lectures related to supernatural powers, and I also wanted to see how the lectures of each major that I only roughly described in my novel went about things.

So I just went back to Class A's classroom where no teacher was present. There I found nearly all the children, except a few, gathering around a bulletin board.

As soon as I went through the door all of their eyes turned to me.

"……"

"……"

Why were they staring at me like that?

The gazes from the guys gathered around the bulletin board were lukewarm. Rather than filled with mixed hostility, their gazes held curiosity and incomprehension.

"Hey, you don't have any talent, do you?"

It was No. 10 Cayer Vioden who said these words. It was then that I realized why the kids were crowding around the bulletin board like that.

Mr. Epinhauser posted each students profile on the bulletin board. They were posted with the intentions of getting to know each other's talents so that everyone knew what to be careful of.

Of course, Ellen's tremendous talents weren't all written down, so she didn't get much attention.

There probably were some kids who were curious what talents the others held, so they found out that the bottom ranked No. 11 only had aptitudes and no talents.

So they found it weird.

“Yeah, so what?”

It was true, so I didn’t have anything else to say to him. I just went back to my seat and sat down. My seat was on the far left in the second row near the window, as the tables were arranged by numerical order. The classroom was spacious so there was no need for us to share desks. I had this huge desk all to myself.

I tried to get rid of them, but these strange gazes seemed to follow me. Bertus was also looking at me with a strange smile on his face.

“No, hey. How does that make any sense?”

Cayer came to my seat as if he didn’t understand this at all.

“This is the Royal Class, a place not everyone can enter, even if they have a talent. How did you get into this place, which required one to have exceptional talent? What’s more into Class A? Shouldn’t you be at least in Class B?”

I did set him up to be someone with a strong personality, but I didn’t expect he’d come at me like that on the first day of class.

Cayer really didn’t understand and to him my existence on its own seemed ridiculous. He seemed very angry. How should I even respond to this? He was ready to grab my collar and no one seemed to want to stop him.

Bertus seemed to be just watching the situation.

“I seriously don’t understand. Hey. What are you? How could someone like you be here?”

“Hey you.”

“……What?”

I wanted to act more mature. To be honest, how old was I to be overreacting over

something like a kid badgering me?

I didn't want to stand out.

I didn't mean to.

But, so what.

"Don't fuck with me, go ask the admissions office for all I care."

Seeing this situation happen right in front of my eyes, I snapped back a bit.

Seeing me reacting not as he expected, Cayer's complexion drastically changed.

"Y, you punk, you, just now… What… H, how dare you not have any talent and…"

"Why are you asking me about the decision the admissions office made? Do you think I came through some back door? Huh? I just came here because they sent me here, like you. Who do you think you are? And what do you mean with 'How dare I'? Are you the admissions examiner or the head of the admissions office?"

"No. This…"

"Hah, are you the head of the admissions office?"

"That isn't…"

"Hah, are or aren't you the head of the admissions office? You bastard! Yes or no?"

-Clatter!

He was startled as I jumped up from my seat and approached him. He began to retreat step by step.

"Are or aren't you? What's taking you so long? Huh?"

"N, no… I… am not."

"So why are you meddling in this?"

He was definitely so scared that his face turned blue.

“Hey, Number 10. Number 10 who has this huge magical talent but can’t feel mana for shit.”

“A,ah…”

One didn’t have to be talented to be a jerk. Did you avoid poop because you were afraid of it? No, you avoid it because it’s dirty. I couldn’t become some scary guy right now, so I had to become a dirty bastard so that one wouldn’t want to touch me.

That guy in front of me wasn’t even talented in combat anyway.

“Why don’t we just treat each other well, huh?”

-Thump

“Aren’t you going to answer?”

When I opened my eyes and stared at him, his complexion turned as white as a sheet of paper, then he slightly nodded.

“A, ah…”

I patted that naughty bastard on the cheek and sat back down. The atmosphere around my classmates watching the scene was chilly.

I was tired.

Like that I would be branded as some dirty bastard, who didn’t even have an ability.

But I wasn’t wrong you know? I was sent here by the admissions office, you know?

Afterwards.

I really didn’t want to stand out, but here I was standing out faster than lightning.

I could foresee a dark future for my school days.

* * *

Thanks to No. 10 getting things turned on him while he was trying to pick a fight with me, no one else tired. They must have been shocked seeing a crazy person acting like a jerk, not in the least intimidated by his lack of talent.

They just heard from the teacher that they might get killed if they use their ability first so only a completely crazy guy would have the guts to do anything. If he wasn't that than he was just totally ignorant. Well, something like that certainly would happen again in the future.

Class B was a very friendly class. Sometimes one could hear laughter drifting over from there, but Class A was deathly silent. Except for the sound of pens moving, the teachers' lecture and the questions asked from time to time, it was completely devoid of laughter.

Originally, this place was supposed to be a gathering of only that kind of people, but I couldn't help but sigh at the thought that the atmosphere of horror I created for no good reason must have played a part in this.

Damn it, I seriously got angry at a kid. I'm the worst kind of human being.

I sat in class feeling shame.

Common classes were like general classes that everyone had to take.

For example, classes such as history, geography, mathematics, literature and ethics. Each teacher was in charge of a different subject, perhaps it was set that the homeroom teacher wasn't in charge of any classes.

During the brief break between classes and the end of them, the children seemed to be chatting with each other, slowly getting to know each other.

– You have aptitude for magic? What classes are you going to take?

-Well… I'm not sure yet.

-Then would you like to ask our teacher what to take?

-Huh? Ah, that… Well… Hm.

-Royal Class seems to have exclusive lectures different from other general class kids.

Maybe we could just get a lecture for just the two of us.

-Oh… Really?

Kids with similar talents seemed to want to apply for the same classes. On the day you self-applied for a lecture, you would have to listen to the lecture with general class students, so they wanted to have one more person they knew as psychological crutch.

So on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, people talented in combat would join combat classes, people talented in magic would attend magic classes and people with supernatural abilities would join classes for supernatural ability users. In the case of people talented in divine power, they tended to attend combat lectures as they often had another combat talent.

And so, everyone was talking about what to apply for, others thought about it on their own. That was how the class time passed.

Lunch time.

Since there were only about 100 people in the Royal Class, all years ate lunch in a large restaurant. There was no need to stand in line with a plate in hand, and one could just take along whatever one wanted to eat.

It was natural that senior students were also mixed in the crowd, but the zones were implicitly divided. Some seats were reserved for first years, others for second years and so on. Of course both classes A and B were mixed together, hence they had to eat in the same place.

Class A gathered around Bertus and had a meal. He seemed like a good-natured person, so maybe he already gained some followers.

Class B was no different.

-Hey, Charlotte, try this. It's so delicious.

-Ah… Ah, No, thank you. I don't like oily things.

Class B was centered around Charlotte, but the reason seemed to be a different one.

-You have to eat a lot to be healthy!

-Do you dislike vegetables?

She was kidnapped to the Demon King's Castle and entered Temple shortly after returning. So it seemed like everyone was worried about Charlotte's health. Not only that, but even her seniors were looking at the princess with pity.

They were clamoring to take care of Charlotte with Ludwig at the forefront, while Charlotte seemed to struggle dealing with this situation.

I set up Class B to have a friendly atmosphere, but even with Charlotte added, the atmosphere remained friendly and the reason for that was Ludwig. He was a typical manga protagonist type character with an optimistic, friendly and energetic personality.

I didn't have much contact with people like that, but I feel like I didn't really like people like that.

Even though there were so many open seats, Class A gathered around Bertus and Class B gathered around Charlotte.

And then there were five people eating on their own, as if trying to keep their distance from each other, including myself, who had a bit of an incident this morning.

A-2 Ellen Artorius.

A-5 Cliffman.

A-11 Yours truly.

B-2 Louis Ankton.

B-3 Scarlett.

Were all outsiders, introverts trying to keep their distance?

All the outsiders, including me, were eating silently.

-I'm going to have an upset stomach…

Charlotte’s melancholic voice sounded strangely sentimental.

CHAPTER 30

Most of the general classes were decent enough. This was supposed to be my first year of high school and I didn't know this world's common sense too well, but it was understandable.

The Royal Class was a place where people with outstanding talents gathered, but that didn't mean they were all smart. Rather, there were some guys sleeping in class. Those with good brains were completely focused, even some of the guys with physical talents managed to concentrate. But there were a lot of guys who were just average and some who didn't even attend, because they were kids. This class' students were chosen based on talent not on intelligence.

However, for me, who had already finished my education before, these classes were usually either boringly easy or just reliant on memorization.

By the way.

-Run! Don't stop! Jump!

"Gasp… Gasp… Gasp…"

"I, I ca, can't anymore…"

"Wheeze… Wheeze…"

"Why do I have to do this?!"

-Your middle school days are over! There'll be no one consoling you anymore if you're throw a tantrum!

As for the physical training classes, I was literally sweating blood. We had to do this cycle of physical training exercises that were close to corporal punishment.

– Magic, supernatural power, studying and physical training must not be neglected. You are the future of the empire. If you do not meet a certain level of physical fitness by the end of this semester, I will fail you! Keep that in mind!

It was an illusion that it was okay for wizards to be weak.

If one relies too much on their supernatural power, one would get hurt someday.

He who lacks stamina, won't be able to study properly.

It was obviously me who wrote these sentences. Therefore, regardless of major, one had to conduct physical training during the common classes. There was no such thing as a major that would allow one to be weak after all.

So it was said that children who had non-combat talents hated this class the most.

It's like I'm getting punished for my own words right now.

-Hey, you there! Don't walk!

"Sigh…"

As I was receiving that high-intensity physical training now, I almost felt like throwing up the food I had not too long ago.

-Run! I've never seen anyone die from running! Hey, I can't see you over there! Look at that!

Where the p.e. teacher was pointing was a guy that was running at a constant speed from start to finish.

-Tok, tok, tok, tok!

He was also sprinting at that, saying some refreshing words as he passed by me.

"Cheer up, Reinhardt!"

"I, I'm going crazy…"

It was Ludwig.

P.E. was one of the classes Class A and B took together.

That guy had only one talent.

Stamina.

All physical abilities were ranked according to a system. I reconfirmed the settings I made in the past by looking at the rank classification criteria written next to the physical data table of my classmates.

0~4 (F Rank)

5~7 (D Rank)

8~13 (C Rank)

14~19 (B Rank)

20~30 (A Rank)

31~35 (S Rank)

36~40 (S+ Rank)

In addition to that, there was an SS Rank, but having that specification was rather meaningless. Beyond that, would represent a superhuman's level of strength. Of course there were some who would reach that level.

F~D Ranks corresponded to the lower grades.

C Rank corresponded to intermediate level.

B Rank corresponded to advanced, and beyond that, growth was extremely slow. Unless one was born with a certain type of physique, one might face the limits of one's growth there. No matter how hard one tried, one might not be able to reach A Rank.

In other words, it is said that A Rank would be almost the limit a human being could reach. If one reached something like the A+ Rank that might already be the limit.

From S Rank up, it was clearly at the level of a super human. Ordinary training alone wouldn't get one there.

Ludwig's stamina is 30, which corresponded to A+ Rank.

The average stamina someone our age normally had was D Rank, meaning 6~7, while that guy's stamina was already at 30. He was a nutcase who had the physical strength of humanity's top athletes. That was Ludwig.

That was his only talent and specialty.

"Wha, what kind of monster is he…"

My other classmates had their mouths wide open when they saw Ludwig's crazy stamina. I didn't feel any jealousy or admiration towards that guy for being faster than me.

I think I was just going to die that instant. Should I keep doing this? For the whole semester? Every time we had common classes? Twice a week?

I was worried whether it would be okay to choose a supernatural power as my first talent or if I should choose stamina first. After all, that guy was just as fast on his feet as Ellen.

"……"

-Pak!

Ellen Artorius, who also ran at a constant tempo without any disturbance, passed me as well.

* * *

The P.E. class that turned people into super humans included not only running but also strength training. There was no distinction made between men and women. There were only five people who were able to stand properly: Class A No. 2 Ellen, No.1 Bertus, No. 5 Cliffman, Class B No. 3 Scarlett and No. 11 Ludwig.

Everyone else made noises like zombies. there were some kids even crying.

"If you're able to cry then you're still pretty energetic!"

However, the P.E. teacher, who looked like a demon from hell, was merciless.

There was just one person standing beside him.

Charlotte de Gardias watched us withering away like that.

The P.E. teacher excluded her from training because she was still weak and needed absolute rest. She must have gone through a lot of hardship already in the Demon King's Castle, so no one objected.

Students and teachers were amazed at how well she was taking classes.

Even on the verge of death, my eyes were drawn to Charlotte. What kind of talent did she have? It must have been written on Class B's bulletin board, but I didn't want to attract more attention by checking it.

Charlotte was just watching what we were doing. She faced a life or death crisis once, even though we faced it together that time.

I realized again that I had no idea what personality Charlotte de Gardias actually had. It was because the personality she held during the crisis and her personality now seemed distinctly different.

"He, hey! It's too fast! I can't count!"

"Hoo! Hoo! Hoo!"

Next to me, Ludwig was doing sit-ups at lightning speed and the child holding his legs and counting across from him was crying. Maybe because he was from Class B but I wasn't familiar with his face, so I couldn't remember his name.

Now I knew for sure.

It was the same with Sarkegaar.

I hated these energetic guys.

* * *

After the two-hours of hellish P.E. classes, everyone washed up in the shower and changed their clothes.

"Why are the showers and changing rooms integrated?"

Erich de Lafaeri grumbled loudly.

The shower facilities themselves were impeccable. Although men and women got divided it was used by both classes. The men's and women's changing rooms and shower rooms were shared by Class A and B.

He was complaining about that.

I didn't even care about that as I felt like my soul was leaving my body. Except for those who had a certain level of stamina, there were some who collapsed to the floor altogether.

A-8 Kono Lint was murmuring blankly.

"That's not the problem… We have to do this again on Thursday…"

– Aaaaarg…

Regardless of class, moans and groans of lamentation flowed out of nearly everyone's mouth. Everyone had to go through the same hardships again, so who cared about that single detail.

Worked to death on Monday, rest two days, then get worked to death again on Thursday. Yes, there certainly was an intention behind that.

-Hit!

"……What's wrong with him?"

When I was getting angry at myself for writing such a dog-like novel and hit my head, everyone was looking at me with strange expressions.

Anyway, sorry guys.

However, I ran into a problem while changing clothes in the changing room.

"Hey, Number 11."

"…What?"

Cayer Vioden spoke to me. I was still in pain and felt like dying, so what problem did that idiot have with me now?

“You’re not in particularly good shape, are you?”

“…What about it?”

I didn’t know what the hell he was thinking, but he also seemed to be on the verge of dying because of how tired he felt. He wasn’t particularly good physically either.

“Hey, are you any good at fighting? Huh?”

What was with that childish quarrel. I guess he acted like that because he got scared after I acted a bit like a jerk.

That was why his pride got hurt, so seeing me struggling during P.E., he seemed to think that I wasn’t that much different from him. That was why he gained some confidence and started picking a fight with me in the changing room while I was tired.

The men’s only changing room.

What a good place to fight for one’s pride.

“I’m not good at it.”

I couldn’t get mad at this guy again, so I would just put up with his antics for now. To be honest, I regretted my actions earlier.

“So what gives you such confidence then? Huh?”

Ah, he’s so childish, it felt like goosebumps ran up my neck and back. Was I too old for this? What gives you the confidence? What the hell was with that?

I was just speechless and didn’t feel like answering.

“Fucking with me again… Hah, what weird nonsense are you talking about?”

“Fucking with you? Be respectful. Huh? Aren’t you just a bitch?”

-Tap!

Cayer tapped me on the shoulder.

“Don’t do that.”

“Why, wanna try me again? Huh? Go ahead. That’s right, it’s ridiculous for a bastard like you to come to Class A. Huh? What kind of trick did you use? Huh? A guy with no talent? Did you bribe them with money?”

-Tap

It seemed like that guy wouldn’t step down to heal his damaged ego. I hurt his pride more than I thought.

I had to admit that I was being pretty impatient at that moment.

“Arg!”

-Thud!

I grabbed him by the scruff of his neck and threw him down. He was in a pretty weakened state so I could do it easily.

The guy who fell over in an instant looked up at me in puzzlement.

It was quite funny actually.

The students of the Royal Class were chosen by talent.

It was completely different from the Orbis Class, which used the exact opposite methode to choose its members.

In other words, those guys weren’t that skilled.

“There are children who understand things they are told immediately, and then there are brats who first need a beating to understand.”

I had two fights with the same guy on my first day at Temple.

“I think you’re a brat.”

-Pow!

“Arg!”

“Let me give you that beating.”

I kicked the guy who fell to the floor in the stomach.

The Royal Class didn’t have anyone who was as skilled as they were proud.

There were a lot of students who put a lot of faith in their talent and didn’t bother putting in any effort.

That was the weak point of the Royal Class. The students were selected by talent and they wouldn’t fail if they didn’t decide to drop out themselves.

Like that guy in front of me, there were people who considered themselves to be part of a very privileged class. In fact they didn’t have anything else to show for themselves.

Just some garbage with nothing else to offer but being part of the Royal Class.

I trampled on Cayer’s face.

-Stop!

“Urggg!”

-Bang!

“Cough!”

I kicked him in the head.

Strong bastards didn’t really have to be strong.

-Boom!

“Argh!”

There were several types of bullies, but when it came to fighting, there were two types you absolutely shouldn’t touch.

One who’s good at fighting.

Or one who’s a completely crazy bastard.

If you touched someone who was good at fighting, you’d obviously get beat up if you touch them.

But it was a bit different in the case of a crazy bastard.

People shouldn’t touch someone like that because they wouldn’t know what he’ll do. There were guys who’d really hit someone over the head with a chair, you know?

I couldn’t fight well, so I chose the latter option to not get trampled over.

A person who could act strong was indeed strong. One just had to show some guy, who’s all talk, that you yourself are not.

I was going to act like that while everyone was watching.

All I had to show them is that if you touch me for no good reason your life might get seriously endangered.

I wasn’t strong. I couldn’t even be strong yet.

But I could be cruel.

Body data and rankings don’t show everything.

That’s why I had to show them.

-Pow!

When I stepped on his face again, someone caught me as if they felt something unusual from me as well.

“Stop!”

“Why, why are you doing this?!”

Ludwig and Bertus took me away from him.

“Uh, urgh…”

“Hey, if you’re so confident in yourself, try me again, why don’t you?”

I spoke to Cayer as I was dragged away by Bertus and Ludwig.

“I’ll kill you then.”

Cayer, who lay collapsed on the floor, couldn’t even look at me.

* * *

“You fought?”

“Yes.”

“He hit me first!”

In the end, we were dragged before Mr. Epinhauser due to our fistfight. To be exact, Ludwig and Bertus said something like: “Let’s keep this between us, make up and move on”, but someone went ahead and told the teacher.

I didn’t know who tipped him off, but I knew these guys’ attributes. I wrote down certain characteristics and personality traits for them. And I remembered all their names I had forgotten after the introduction ceremony yesterday.

Someone who had the attributes of a tattle tale.

It had to be B-2 Louis Ankton.

Anyway, he must have rushed to tell someone about the fight and Mr. Mustrang was coincidentally in Class A so it got passed on to Mr. Epinhauser, so we were dragged to his private room.

“Getting into fights from day one, are we?”

“He hit me first! Oh, and he swore at me this morning!”

Cayer, who had a stiff, unhappy expression on his face, began to argue that it was all my fault.

He seemed to have forgotten how I beat him up in the dressing room.

He felt wronged that I hit him, but seemed to have found this to be a great opportunity to get me kicked out. He wanted the teacher to protect him.

“It’s all his fault…”

“Silence.”

Epinhauser looked at Cayer with a cool expression.

“You’re noisy No. 10”

“……”

“Don’t talk when I haven’t asked you to.”

“…Yes.”

Cayer, who was very scared, answered in a withered, quiet voice. Epinhauser’s eyes had such a stillness to them that it felt down right creepy when he looked at you.

I knew he wasn’t a bad person, but this atmosphere sure made me feel nervous.

“No. 11.”

“Yes.”

And him calling students by their number rather than their names felt like he was trying to keep a certain distance from them.

“Did you hit him?”

“Yes.”

“Why did you hit him?”

He asked me while wearing a very curious expression on his face.

“Cayer made statements that undermined Temple’s authority.”

“…What?”

“What are you talking about!”

Epinhauser and even Cayer were bewildered by my sudden statement. They were surprised because it sounded like nonsense. Epinhauser started to stare at me.

“Explain what you mean, No. 11.”

“Yes. Teacher.”

Watch me do this now, you punk.

“Cayer pointed out to me several times this morning that it was unfair for me to be admitted to the Royal Class with only aptitudes. He said it didn’t make any sense for me to enter Royal Class and Class A at that, based just on my aptitudes without having a talent.”

“……?”

Yeah, watch me twist it like that.

Mr. Epinhauser seemed to be surprised not by the content of what I was saying, but how I worded it. Yeah, it was a very serious way to put it.

“So I said to Cayer something to the effect of that students shouldn’t question the decisions made by the Temple Admissions Office. Of course, in that process, I also asked Cayer maybe a bit strongly if he were the head of the admissions office, to which Cayer, of course, answered no. I believed the issue to end there, but I guess Caierre must have felt offended that I had dismissed his remarks at that time.”

Are you the head of the admissions office, you bastard? That’s what I said roughly.

“And just after the P.E. class, he asked me if I were good at fighting in the changing room. So I answered him honestly that I wasn’t very good at it. Maybe he planned to physically subdue me to repay me for the humiliation he felt that morning after he saw me struggling with the physical training. He pushed me several times and asked how I could dare to talk to him like that when I wasn’t even good at fighting. Cayer, do you admit that you said these words?”

At my question, Cayer exclaimed with his face reddened.

“……It’s true, but I just pushed him! That guy hit me!”

“I didn’t hit you because you pushed me.”

Noticing that the talk was about to get more tangled up, Mr. Epinhauser raised his hand.

“Stop, so what did you mean by him undermining Temple’s authority?”

He looked at me, as if warning me to not go on to talk nonsense.

“As Cayer pushed me he said that it would be absurd for a person like me to get into Class A, then asked me what trick I had used to get in. He said that it was clear that I bribed the admissions office and that my admission was fraudulent.”

Cayer’s face paled with every passing moment. He was probably wondering why I gave a speech like that. Everything happened for a reason.

It was true that I was feeling nervous because I was standing in front of Mr. Epinhauser, but, in the end, it was me who set up this character as well.

“I can tolerate insults against me, but Cayer’s remarks casted doubt on the credibility of Temple, the pride of the Empire and the world’s best educational institution.”

I looked at Mr. Epinhauser.

“In other words, he questioned Temple’s credibility and with it the great Gardias Empire. I couldn’t bear my indignation anymore so I might have lost my temper without realizing it. I apologize for my carelessness. Teacher.”

Mr. Epinhauser’s characteristic was…

"……Is it true that you said that, No. 10?"

Overwhelming patriotism.

"I asked if it was true that a student of Royal Class even spread groundless rumors about Temple's system being flawed."

"Tha, that… That… That's… That's…"

"Yes or No. Only answer with either of those two."

Mr. Epinhauser's cold anger wasn't directed at me, but I still felt my throat tingle.

* * *

Mr. Epinhauser was a cold-hearted patriot who took great pride in the Empire and Temple. Therefore, he was extremely calm about other things, but about matters that might damage the honor of either of those two, he was extremely sensitive.

So it was no wonder that he got angry at a student that openly doubted Temple's decision not once but twice in a single day.

Of course, there were some things that I left out of my recount, as this was a very serious matter.

It was easy to make a man out to be the world's worst killer based on nothing depending how one interpreted his words.

A problem doesn't become a problem until it's addressed.

In other words, most words can be twisted in such a way that they sound problematic.

He seemed that he was going to let go of the matter regarding the fight. He told me he would let me off the hook. It seemed to be common for classmates to get into fights in Royal Class.

After that Epinhauser told me that I could go, but that Cayer had to stay. He also mentioned that I seem to have a talent that wasn't treated as one before.

What he meant by that was that I didn't talk like a child my age should. But, so what. It's not like he'd think I was actually an old man on the inside.

Wouldn't it be strange for a complete incompetent to get into Temple's Royal Class, where talents gathered?

Who'd even doubt that there was some old man inside this bastard that is me? If I force myself to act like a child, I'd just feel uncomfortable and it would only be more awkward. I was just going to roll with this character I build.

In the end, Mr. Epinhauser focused more on Cayer but he wouldn't be severely punished. After all, Teacher knew that I exaggerated the situation a bit, and Cayer was just a kid.

It would just be to the extent of a warning.

When I came back to the classroom alone, there was a strange atmosphere hanging around everyone. Cayer didn't come back, only me. I didn't seem like I got scolded at all, so they were curious.

There would be rumors floating around Class A and B about the fight.

Even though he has no talent, he has such a bad temper.

Ah. What was wrong with them just because of one bad apple? Although that bad apple was me, so I had nothing to say.

And then.

[Challenge accomplished]

[Received 100 Achievement Points.]

……*What the hell?*

CHAPTER 31

I was so busy with managing to pass through the entrance ceremony and classes that I didn't even have time to think about how to earn achievement points, but without even realizing it I suddenly managed to beat a challenge.

Come to think of it, they did tell me that the list of challenges would be updated periodically and one of them must have had something to do with this confrontation.

It must have been a challenge for me to beat someone up or something. It seemed to be a good thing. While everyone was staying quiet I decided to check the list of challenges after a long time.

The one at the top seemed to be the one that would give me the highest score among the challenges.

[Get First place in the Integrated Physical Examination – 4000 Points]

The Emperor slapping challenge disappeared and in its place something else appeared.

This would be impossible if I didn't somehow destroyed the legs of everyone who had better stamina than me. However, if I were able to destroy the legs of Ludwig and Ellen Artorius I wouldn't even need those 4000 points to begin with.

[Be within the top 10 of the midterm exam – 3000 Points]

This wasn't just a midterm exam held for us 22 students, but a common subject exam taken by about 10000 people. The grades for each lecture are given separately, but common education subjects were tested to achieve an integrated score. Even though it was just a high school exam, it was just absurd to get into the top 10 without cheating. There were so many super geniuses among the students here after all.

[Receive a love confession from one of your classmates – 1000 Points]

That was 1000 points just because you thought it would never happen, right? What are you gonna do if it actually happened, Huh?!

[Write a Love letter to a Classmate – 200 Points]

[Skip Classes (All Day) – 100 Points]

[Get punished by your teacher – 100 Points]

[Leave some graffiti on Temple's Main Street after curfew – 100 Points]

Why were the only things that seemed possible to do, things that a juvenile delinquent might do? Most of these were impossible or were bizarre.

And of all these bizarre options…

[Fight – 100 Points] (Clear)

I accidentally managed to clear one of them.

I felt somewhat bad because I didn't do that to clear the challenge.

* * *

P.E. was, in fact, the last of the common classes, because it was only natural for everyone to be exhausted after the class was over. That's why the teacher told everyone to go back after the fight broke out.

So, shortly after Cayer came back, Mr. Epinhauser returned for the closing ceremony.

Although Cayer was frustrated for being scolded, he sure wouldn't want to pick a fight with me anymore. I wanted you to realize that my mouth could hurt you more than my fists, kid.

"Everyone, please submit your course application forms. Those who are still undecided, stay."

The students who filled out their application forms handed them to the teacher. I submitted mine as is, as I already had it prepared for me in advance. It seemed that there were still plenty of guys who hadn't decided yet.

"Those who have submitted their forms should go back to the dormitory. Of course, you can also walk around Temple, but you shouldn't stay out too late, especially

when you walk around outside. Please keep in mind that you can't go outside unless you get permission from me or the headmaster."

Mr. Epinhauser left with these words and half of the students got up to leave as well.

How each person spent their personal time was widely varied. Some of them were dedicated to self-improvement.

"Hey, let's go to Main Street."

"I'm tired… I want to go rest…"

"Oh, I know a nice place there! I'm sure you'll like it there, so want to come with?"

Some put there best effort into playing, like for example A-8 Kono Lint. Class B's lessons also ended.

"Do you know any fun places to go to?"

Ludwig was asking his classmates if they knew any fun places to visit as this was his first time at Temple. Of course, everyone was completely exhausted from the P.E. lesson they had not too long ago today.

"Woah, look at these accursed eyes…"

Then, I suddenly heard some quiet swears coming from somewhere beside me.

I knew what they were talking about.

They were talking about a girl that just left the classroom of Class B.

"Whenever I see her, I immediately feel my luck slipping away from me."

"She's so creepy."

Erich de Lafaeri said loudly as if he intended her to hear everything. She must have heard it, but Scarlett just continued walking ahead pretending to not hear a thing.

She had red hair and red eyes. They made it hard for her not to stand out.

B-3 Scarlett.

“Such an ominous thing can’t possibly be born naturally.”

Erich gritted his teeth while staring at Scarlett’s back.

“I can’t believe such a thing made it to the Royal Class. What bad luck.”

What do you know, you bastard? You don’t even know that you’re standing right beside a Demon Prince? Idiot.

Erich calmly walked over to Scarlett and bumped into the girl as he passed by.

“……”

Scarlett began to pick up the items she dropped without saying a word, as if she was already used to that situation. Ludwig tilted his head as he looked at Erich’s leaving figure.

“What, he bumped into you and didn’t even apologize. Is that okay?”

“Yes.”

“I’ll help you.”

“It’s fine.”

As if trying to refuse his help, Scarlett quickly picked up her dropped items, turned away from Ludwig and walked away.

Erich wasn’t the only one.

Most of the Class A and B students were also secretly avoiding Scarlett. There were those who just avoided her and those who didn’t care at all about her. Erich only directly bullied her, but with the exception of Ludwig, everyone treated her the same.

Sheesh.

It didn’t feel all that good seeing the bullying I set up happening right in front of my eyes.

* * *

Red was an ominous color.

Born with red hair and red eyes, Scarlett was abandoned by her parents at birth. Her setting was that she got picked up by a beggar who took pity on her. My fabricated origin was something similar, but she really was from the streets.

She was dragged to the guards a few times for stealing some bread, but one day her talent was discovered by a wizard that happened to pass by coincidentally and was sent to Temple. She had a great talent, so becoming a scholarship student was a given.

However, she got bullied by the students in Temple all the time, getting called ominous.

Scarlett had no other place to go once she left Temple though, so she just clenched her teeth, endured this humiliation and just went on with her life. Therefore, although she was physically very adept and talented at that, she was still stuck with those children bullying her. If she caused trouble and got expelled, that would be the end.

So she got a scholarship and ended up in Royal Class. However, Erich, who had been tormenting Scarlett countless times even in middle school, also entered Royal Class.

It obviously was that kind of setting.

Anyway, the bloody eyed Scarlett had been famous among her classmates for a long time now. In a negative way.

However, I realized how irresponsible I was when I set her as a target for bullying just because she stood out a bit.

I didn't think there was anyone else who would look so good in her red hair and eyes. She stood out even from a distance because she was such a pretty girl.

Red = Negative, so she got bullied for it?

Flammable trash, that's what that was. She should have been Temple's idol, but she got bullied anyway. Actually, Erich should have fallen in love with Scarlett and just

teased her, like little boys would harrass the girls they liked.

But looking at all the things Erich would do to her, it would definitely not be to the point of simply teasing the girl he liked.

“If I become an inquisitor, I will grab you first and tear you apart”, obviously wasn’t something one would say to a girl one liked. Ah.

How could he say such things to such a cute and kind kid?

But wasn’t it actually me who wrote this?

Aren’t I the piece of trash then?

Yes, I am.

How could I make characters say such harsh things to a child like that?

Yes, I absolutely deserved to die from high blood pressure caused by malicious comments.

“Haah…”

When I saw Scarlett walking to the dormitory area from a distance, I sighed, feeling guilty about making this strange setting with my own two hands.

If I left it as is, Erich’s bullying would intensify, leading Ludwig to become angry and asked Erich for a duel for the sake of Scarlett. So, a fight broke out and after many turns, Scarlett was freed from her bullying and they became friends.

However, I had to watch this shit until Ludwig decided to come out…

The rest of the kids also thought that the color red was ominous, so even those kids with a sense of justice would just remain silent.

Sigh.

* * *

Those who returned to the dormitory would spend their time on their own until

evening. Class B seemed to have gone to Temple's Main Street with Ludwig.

Dinner time started at 6 pm. Since each dormitory had their own separate cafeteria in their dormitories, I would just eat at the dormitory cafeteria of Class A Year 1. Sometimes the whole student body would eat at the banquet hall, but that was rather unusual.

Anyway, there was still time until evening. Class A was rather quiet compared to the noisy Class B.

It felt more like complete silence actually.

Well, there was no need to worry anymore since I had 1000 achievement points saved up. So I tried to decide which talent I should choose.

[Self-suggestion – 1000 Points]

Self-suggestion.

I acquired that talent without thinking about this any further. This was the most fraudulent supernatural power I could think of.

As for how much of a cheat it was. I once wanted to give this power to one of the characters, but after thinking about it a bit more, I removed it entirely for how scammy that power was.

So in other words, I had never used that setting. It seemed like data that I originally discarded got recycled. It was similar to the situation of the capital, which I imagined to have the same layout as Seoul, although I never wrote it anywhere, however, it actually turned out to have the same layout. Although, there were some abilities that definitely didn't appear.

It was also great that it had the same point requirement as low level talents, as it was an ability that would evolve over time.

I checked my status.

Valier

Age: 17

Current stats: [Strength 3.5(F)] [Agility 4.4(F+)] [Dexterity 5.2(D-)] [Magic 9.9(C-)][Stamina 5.9(D-)]

Race: Arcdemon

Talent: Supernatural – Self-suggestion (Locked)

Abilities

[Demon Domination D](Unique to Arcdemons) (Cannot be used in current state.)

[Self-suggestion](Locked)

Comprehensive Ability Assessment – Lowest Level Demon

Combat Level Assessment – F

There was a subtle rise in strength, agility and stamina. That wasn't just because of the p.e. class today, but also because of my hard work up until now…

However.

Wasn't there something strange?

What does that (Locked) written behind the talent mean?

"……"

I was just lying in bed and I discovered a weird twist. I had that strong permonition that I had been fucked.

Yeah, I had a cheat, but it was certainly an uncooperative cheat. I should have looked into that more when I was buying an ability. Supernatural powers could certainly be used with just a single talent, so there must have been a good reason as to why it was sold so cheaply.

I had a vague feeling of what was going on.

It was wide spread common knowledge that supernatural powers couldn't be awakened though sheer effort.

However, reality was a bit different. All those who have been found to have a talent for supernatural powers had “awakened” their powers. One could say, they were able to raise the level of their ability to such an extent in which it became apparent no matter if one could control it or not.

However, there were actually a few people who had latent supernatural abilities. They just hadn’t manifested yet.

Such latent supernatural powers might awaken after being traumatized or being under immense psychological pressure. Even the one’s with these abilities around me awakened after a traumatic experience.

What?

It’s a common development.

Awakening one’s powers after exploding into anger.

It’s like those chuuni fantasies…

Right…?

“Shit.”

I knew. I kind of expected it, but I still hoped it would be a little different in my case.

I got it from my cheat, so I thought I could just use it right away. But I couldn’t.

I didn’t buy an activated supernatural power. I bought a latent one.

Yeah, I now knew why it was so cheap.

CHAPTER 32

The only one who naturally awakened was Number B-3, Liana de Grantz. The rest of the supernatural power users awakened unintentionally after experiencing something traumatic.

Natural awakenings were extremely rare and shouldn't be taken as the norm. I didn't know how long it would take my power to just awaken naturally.

Then, it looked like there was no other way than going through a psychologically pressuring situation to forcefully awaken my ability…

I experienced something like that while I was escaping from the Demon King's Castle and I really didn't want to be thrown into such a situation again.

Couldn't that experience be counted as a form of traumatic prepayment and just awaken me already?

Of course, it couldn't. I thought I could maybe artificially awaken myself with achievement points, but that didn't seem to be the case.

Damn it, I wasn't expecting to be able to use it right away because it was still at a low level, but for it to not even be activated.

What was even the use of this dog-like supernatural power, if I couldn't even use it yet?

Okay, let's just think about the future first.

I didn't intend to just settle with one talent. I had to think of a way to awaken my supernatural ability and what talent I should acquire next. I wished I had a talent that could be of help right away.

When I confirmed the performance of Ludwig's talent today, I felt like it was incredible.

[Swordsmanship – 2000 Points]

[Archery – 2000 Points]

.

.

.

The prices doubled. That was what I pretty much expected. I thought it might just multiply by 10, completely shattering my hope, but it, at least, left me with some hope, huh?

However, I currently had 0 achievement points. I had invested all of them into buying this inactive supernatural power. At this rate one wouldn't even be able to detect that I had a supernatural ability.

If they could do that, the Empire would sweep all of them up.

There are two things I had to do from now on.

One, I have to put extreme psychological pressure onto myself to awaken my supernatural ability.

Two, I needed to earn achievement points to buy an additional talent.

If I were to earn 2000 achievement points through events and challenges that would usually give me about 100 points, I would be able to get a second talent unless the prices changed.

Right now, I wasn't exactly sure what to do, so the only thing I could try now were the challenges.

However, there were only those strange actions, crimes and things juvenile delinquents would do among them.

However.

[Write a love letter to one of your classmates and get dumped– 200 Points]

"……"

It was very easy to achieve, but it was also very easy to see that this challenge wanted me to trample all over my dignity.

I mean, that kind of corssed the line.

Wouldn't that mean I had to confess to a highschool kid and then get dumped?

But why did this give me twice as much points while other challenges just give me 100?

Ah.

What if…

Did they want me to humiliate myself?

200 Points.

Twice as much as usual.

If I were just to suffer for a bit, I would receive 200 points.

Apparently, that filthy bastard named Reinhardt, some bully who beat up his classmate on the first day, suddenly wrote a love letter to someone?

If rumors like that were to spread about me, my image as a jerk with a bad personality doing pervy things would be cemented in everyone's mind. The risk of that was just too great. These were my classmates whom I had to see for the next 6 years after all.

There was even that restriction "classmate". So if I sent it to the wrong person everything would be meaningless. Did classmate include Class B or only Class A?

No.

No wait.

Let's see.

Let's think about this differently.

Let's look at this from a different angle.

Rather, I found a much better method.

[Receive a love confession from a classmate – 1000 Points]

This, I think, this might be possible?

* * *

Of course, Temple, which was a huge educational complex, didn't only have schools. There was no reason for there to not be a commercial district where children of wealthy families gathered endlessly.

There weren't only high-class restaurants, but also cafes, clothing stores and entertainment facilities.

So, the kids who liked to play spend most of their time wandering around Main Street, it was also known as an area in which students came to the most.

"Isn't it great?"

"Ah, yeah."

"This is where I've been going to for the past 3 years, and almost everything there tastes good. I can assure you of that."

"I know, I've been here a few times."

Erich nodded at Kono Lint making a fuss. Cayer had his arms crossed and wasn't even touching the dessert in front of him.

On the table the three sat at, were cakes, pretzels and other desserts spread out in front of them. They just bought some hot dogs Kono Lint recommended at a nearby restaurant and came here for desserts.

"Hey. Just eat and relax."

"I'm not hungry."

“Just take a bite. It’s sweet, you know?”

Kono Lint smiled and pushed the plate towards Cayer. All of them, except Erich, were commoners, but it wasn’t hard for Erich to get along with them, because the Lafaeli family were rural lords.

Originally, those three didn’t get along so quickly. However, they united on the first day because of one reason.

“Yeah, we have to pay attention to that madman.”

It was Number A-11 Reinhardt.

He didn’t have any talent, but had a bad temper, so that madman threw punches and swore like a sailor starting the first day of the semester.

Because of Reinhardt becoming their common enemy, the three of them became close on the first day. Cayer even got hit by that man without any talent, and got punished by the teacher even though it was he who got wronged.

“No, but why did you end up getting scolded?”

Kono Lint didn’t seem to understand.

“Yeah. What happened?”

“No idea. I don’t even know what that bastard meant with what he said. Anyway, something about me insulting Temple.”

Unfortunately, Cayer couldn’t remember all the words Reinhardt kept on babbling out. But when Mr. Epinhauser heard Reinhardt’s words, he rebuked Cayer with a serious expression.

“What are you talking about? Insulting Temple?”

“I don’t know. That fucking bastard, I’ll get him later and when I do I’m going to kill him.”

At Erich’s words, Cayer quickly turned his gaze out the window with an irritated expression on his face. Every group needed to have a common enemy in order to

form solidarity.

Those three made Reinhardt their common enemy.

“Hey, but aren’t all the girls in our class really pretty?”

Kono Lint suddenly lowered his voice. Erich nodded his head.

“That’s true. Still I wouldn’t tell them that face to face. We are classmates in Temple, but they wouldn’t even give me a glance if we were outside.”

“But, hey, aren’t we all in the same class now?”

“There aren’t only good-natured people like the prince among them. You have to be careful. Not to mention the Imperial Princess, there’s the Princess of the Saint-Owan Grand Duchy and the Duke of Grantz is also a high lord. They have more prestige than the Emperor.”

Erich was clearly drawing a line. They mingled in temple, but outside, they were people of completely different standing. No matter how young they were, they weren’t the type of people he could touch even a single hair of.

“But how about now? Wouldn’t you be able to talk to them?”

Kono Lint poked at them as if he was really interested in this topic.

“Who do you think is the prettiest? Huh?”

“Me?”

“Ah, I personally think it’s the Imperial Princess.”

As Kono Lint said so, Erich frowned as if he was unwilling to share. Erich and Cayer refused to speak, but after continuous prying on Kono Lint’s part they eventually confessed.

“I think… Number 2.”

At Erich’s words, Kono Lint tilted his head.

“Her? What…? I mean, sure, but isn’t she a little scary? I’m speechless.”

“You asked me who I think looks best.”

“Ah, well. What about you?”

“If I had to say…”

Cayer thought about it and then finally spat it out.

“Duke Grantz’ esteemed daughter…”

“Oh, I can get behind that.”

This was what kids and adults alike liked to talk about when they got together. Just when they were in the middle of talking about beauties.

“Erm… Excuse me, but…”

Suddenly, all of them turned their heads hearing the voice of a girl coming from somewhere.

“Cou, could you give me a minute… Would it be okay to talk for a bit?”

There, a beautiful girl was shyly talking to Kono Lint. He nearly doubted his eyes.

“Well, here.”

Kono Lint, who got dragged out of the dessert shop as if possessed, nearly had his head explode at this unknown girl shyly giving him an envelope.

“Thi, this. Erm… What… Might this be?”

He started speaking formally without realizing it.

“Please read it…”

The girl’s face was flushed and she wriggled her body, trying not to make eye contact. When he opened the envelope as if possessed by something, there was a single sentence written on a piece of paper.

[I fell in love with you at first sight. Please go out with me.]

“Thi, this… This is…”

Male, 17 years old.

He just experienced a miracle he had never even dreamed of in his life.

“Ehm… What do you think…?”

To the girl’s quiet question.

“I fell in love at first sight with you too!”

Kono Lint nearly stumbled over his words.

What the boy, however, didn’t see was the corners of the girl’s mouth slowly creeping up.

* * *

I sold my soul for points.

[Achievement points: 1000 Points]

“……”

I thought about it, but when I actually put it to praxis I felt my heart break.

Scared of confirming if the confession challenge was completed, I pretended I was busy and ran off.

Then, I changed my clothes in a dark alleyway as to not get found out, turned back into Reinhardt and returned to the dormitory.

It didn’t say I had to ‘Get the confession in the form of Reinhardt’ in the challenge information after all.

I noticed that blind spot and tried to exploit it right away, and it worked. It seemed like a good idea in my head, but when I actually did it, I felt like dying during every

single second of it.

I had preserved my dignity as Reinhardt, but I seriously tarnished my dignity as a human being and played with an innocent 17-year-old boy's heart, no matter how much I set him up to be a playboy.

Kono Lint was a bit lacking, but by no means a bad guy.

And here I trampled all over his heart.

I feel like I've become less then human feces…

[Challenge list has been updated.]

A message appeared in front of me. The remaining ones stayed the same, but there were some changes.

[From now on, unless stated otherwise, the condition that all challenges have to be completed as 'Reinhardt' has been added.]

[Receive a love confession from a classmate – 1000 Points](Clear)

[Write a love letter to a classmate and get dumped – 200 Points]

[Get punished by your teacher – 100 Points]

[Leave some graffiti on Temple's Main Street after curfew – 100 Points]

Look at this bastard.

Did you not expect me to take advantage of this weak spot? You added that condition immediately after I finished the challenge, didn't you?

How annoying, fixing it right away, pah.

The challenges were definitely only there to fuck me over. You didn't expect me to make use of an exploit, but I did, so you added that condition.

You want me to write a love letter and get dumped so bad?

Then,

An unexpected challenge had been added.

[Date Kono Lint as a pretty girl (Idiot) – 1000 Points]

Ah.

Ah.

Ah!

That guy's watching me in real time! I don't really know how he's doing it but I bet he laughed his guts out while he watched me talk!

My desire to disappear from the surface of this world grew ten times stronger.

Even if the world were to collapse, I won't ever do that.

* * *

I sold my soul for 1000 points.

I never thought I'd manage to get that much in a single day. I wasn't sure, but I believe this wasn't the direction that voyeuristic ass wanted this to go.

If I collect 1000 more points, I would be able to buy another talent. I wasn't even considering going on a date with Kono Lint.

I returned to the dormitory thinking about how I should get the remaining 1000 points. Naturally, I threw the sweatshirt I wore while I met Kono Lint outside the shop, away and returned in another outfit. I didn't plan on leaving any traces behind.

Evening.

-Hehe… Hehehe…

The sight of Kono Lint and the other two fiddling with their food looking at him with envious eyes made my stomach ache.

I felt like I was about to throw up all my food because of this complex mix of guilt, shame and humiliation I felt.

I felt so nauseous I couldn't get myself to eat the dinner. In the end, I wasn't even able to eat half of the prepared menu. I could certainly feel that the chef was really skilled though.

However, I didn't think I could appreciate those skills today.

Kono Lint seemed to be living in his happy delusions for a while. However, what will happen after that condition fades?

Would he get depressed?

No.

Let's not care about him.

As soon as I start to caring, I'll lose.

Even though my supernatural ability hadn't even awakened yet.

I left the restaurant while continuing to self-suggest myself.

One might say this was a type of extreme psychological pressure in its own way.

It had no effect though.

* * *

I'd say I did a pretty impressive job for my first day. Although it was still inactive, I managed to get the supernatural ability I was aiming for and got a great amount of achievement points.

If I somehow got 1000 more points, I would be able to get my second talent or I could use it for other purposes.

It seemed I could, not only buy talents, but also randomly raise my stats, but I hadn't put that under consideration yet. My stats rose just by training normally. If I were to receive physical training similar to the one I had today, my stats would continue to

rise.

Unless it was a special case like the magic stat.

And there was something I was worried about.

If one saw profit once, one would crave for more. I earned 1000 points, but I was still hungry for more.

You could never know when those challenges would disappear. I had no idea when that mysterious bastard changed his mind, right?

The newly updated challenges probably wouldn't have any more weak spots and it seemed likely that their content would be more difficult or humiliating than before.

Things, including skipping class, would lead to disciplinary actions. I didn't get into much trouble, but Epinhauser seemed to already have a certain picture of me because of the fight, and if I caused any more problems, I, of course, wouldn't get away with it.

[Write a love letter to a classmate and get dumped – 200 Points]

It seemed to encourage me to write a love letter. I wrote a love letter earlier but I didn't get dumped, so I wasn't able to finish it.

The condition was to get dumped after all.

It was rather sad knowing that fulfilling that condition was just too easy. Under my current circumstances the probability of getting dumped was 100%…

If I just endured that humiliation for a bit, I would be able to get 200 points, but then I still had to get 800 more.

Actually, if that idea of using the Dreadfiend's ring to get a confession didn't cross my mind, I wanted to try something else. The problem of all this was that I might get bullied after rumors about this came out, however what would happen if the person I gave the letter to would not gossip about it? They would just treat me as werido.

So it had to be a person that wouldn't start gossiping about me and also wouldn't care that much about me after the act.

Ellen Artorius.

"……"

Should I or shouldn't I?

Should I or shouldn't I?

Ah.

First I sold my soul for points.

Was I now going to trample all over my dignity for points this time?

* * *

There wasn't any need for us to talk for long.

Class A dormitory's gym.

It was obvious where I would be able to find her, so I headed to the gym after everyone was gone.

Ellen Artorius, who received my letter stating my desire to date her, looked at the plain text, then looked at me and spoke briefly.

"No."

"Ah, oh… Okay."

I knew she would answer like that.

[Challenge 'Write a love letter to a classmate and get dumped' completed]

[You have earned 200 achievement points.]

…I wanted to cry.

Knowing that you'll get dumped and actually getting dumped were two completely different things.

Leaving behind Ellen, who continued swinging her practice sword, not paying any more attention to me, I left the gym.

CHAPTER 33

Ellen Artorius was blunt and chic. However, she wasn't the type to care a lot about things.

She was by no means a bad kid, and rather than being clumsy, she just didn't know how to get along with others. She just tended to concentrate on her training. So she didn't try to approach anyone because she thought the other person would just push her away.

She had tremendous talent, but she had no sense of superiority around her that usually came with it. She also didn't feel inferior that one would usually feel when faced with someone stronger than oneself.

She wasn't acting all sweet, but she had a gentle heart.

Of course, I set up a past for her, but that wasn't important now.

Anyway, it didn't really matter whether I confessed to her or not. I wrote a love letter to Ellen because she wouldn't really care about this.

I mean, I actually only did this for the points after all.

However.

"……"

It was bothering me.

It was really bothering me.

It wasn't because I liked her or something, but because I had now become very conscious of her!

I felt so embarrassed and ashamed that I couldn't stand it. That bastard obviously wanted me to be in that state. This was just straight up bullying.

-Now, move from this posture to this and…

Tuesday.

Ellen was sitting next to me in the swordsmanship theory class and I nearly went completely mad about it.

Of course, Ellen and I were the only Royal Class students taking this class. All the other students were regular class students.

Students wearing various types of school uniforms gathered here. And among those, who could recognize the Royal Class uniforms we were wearing, kept glancing at us.

I could read their thoughts just by looking at their eyes.

Wow, they're from Royal Class, aren't they?

That was the look they gave us.

Although they sure were an object of envy, these school uniforms attracted way too much attention…

Bertus, Ludwig, Cliffman and Erich also should have taken lectures on swordsmanship, but they probably chose other lectures for this time slot.

So, did she sit next to me because I was a classmate from Royal Class? Was it like that? You're usually not the type to care about these things though, now aren't you?

Seriously, why did she decide to sit next to me?

Sigh, was she not talking to me because of the sudden confession yesterday? Did she become conscious of me? That can't be. She wasn't like that. Then why did she sit next to me?

What's this? Why was I fussing about this like some teenager?

I've become conscious of a kid like that just because I was trying to earn some points? Ridiculous!

-Tok

"……"

I dropped my pen because I couldn't stop fidgeting. Ellen picked it up silently and handed it to me.

"Ah, uhm. Thank you."

"……"

Was this a positive sign?

Didn't she usually not help people pick up their things? Based on her personality, she wouldn't care about these things, now would she?

Of course, she wouldn't care about me after picking it up and just listened to the lecture. Ah. no, it's definitely not normal for her to pick up pens for others.

No, but what should I do? I'm not interested in her at all. What if she suddenly told me that she liked me? I couldn't accept that at all.

……

I had a problem.

I started to imagine all sorts of delusional, ridiculous scenarios.

Of course.

At the end of the lecture, Ellen left the lecture hall without sparing me a single glance.

Did she even recognize my face to begin with? She didn't even know who I was, did she? No, but we were wearing the same uniforms.

My face was getting hot for no reason.

* * *

This was my class schedule, excluding common classes.

Tuesday I would have swordsmanship theory, swordsmanship practice and magic theory.

Wednesday was Magic Sensitization Training, Mediation and Supernatural Power Control.

On Friday I had Divine Power Training, Alchemy and Integrated Martial Arts Training.

Now, as someone of a lower grade, I only had to listen to three lectures a day, but as I got older I would have to listen to sometimes up to five or six lectures a day. The first three years were like high school courses, and the second half was like university courses.

So, since I didn't have anything I specialized in, I was taking swordsmanship, magic, supernatural powers and divine power classes.

Swordsmanship Theory and Swordsmanship Practice were combined lectures taught by the same teacher so it was a pretty long lecture in which one first learned about the theory in a classroom and then put it to practice in the gym.

A class where one had to put to practice what one learned on the same day and even learn further things while practicing.

Of course, as this was a general class as well, it wasn't a total mess, but there were a bunch of clumsy people among the students.

"Get your posture right! Put power into your hands!"

The problem was, I was included in the category of clumsy people. Of course, I was constantly criticized by the teaching assistants for my poor basic strength as well as my poor posture.

There were even a lot of general students who were so excellent that comparing them to me was completely meaningless, as they learned swordsmanship ever since their middle school days.

"Perfect. As expected from the Royal Class. She's on a completely different level."

"……"

Ellen passed almost every task in one try because she had the physical constitution to imitate what she learned immediately, so her teacher praised her.

The other students were also looking at Ellen, witnessing the skills of someone from the Royal Class.

I didn't really know what the teacher was thinking, but she suddenly clapped her hands.

"As far as I was informed there was one more student of the Royal Class here. Ellen and Reinhardt is what I heard. Is your name Ellen?"

"Yes."

"Reinhardt!"

I looked over to them as I heard the teacher call my name. It seemed like she came up with a good idea.

"Great. Let's have the first practice match between the Royal Class students!"

No.

I don't think that was a good idea at all.

* * *

They shoved a training sword into my hands all of a sudden, while I was still not done practicing my basic posture. Everyone gathered around, wanting to watch the battle between the Royal Class students. Everyone's eyes were sparkling.

What kind of public execution was this?

You want me to have a practice battle with the strongest person of my class?

The teaching assistant who was training me just now, seemed like he wanted to say "I don't think that is a good idea." but couldn't bear to tell the teacher.

What if I die here, huh?

Ellen looked at me indifferently and held her training sword.

“I’ll stop it when it’s going too far, so feel free to fight as much as you want.”

That teacher said some dangerous words without blinking an eye. No, I didn’t want to do this though?

Before I was able to come up with a solution to somehow deal with this situation…

“Now, start!!”

I.

-Tak!

I didn’t even notice Ellen Artorius approaching me.

* * *

An unfamiliar ceiling.

“……”

My head was buzzing.

Wha, what happened?

I thought that I was probably lying in some sort of bed.

Seeing as to how my head hurt, I had probably been hit by something.

At that moment, the situation that happened shortly before I passed out appeared in my mind.

Ellen Artorius rushed at me as soon as the start signal was given, and then struck my head with her sword.

And then I passed out, I guess?

No, but where was I…

“Urg!”

"…You're awake."

When I looked to my right, a calm, cold-looking girl with dark hair and black eyes was looking at me.

"This is the infirmary, classes are over."

I probably got taken to the infirmary after I passed out. The teacher, who seemed to be in charge, checked up on me.

"The pain will subside soon. It's nothing serious, you don't have to worry, okay?"

"Yes."

I nodded at the teacher's words with a bewildered expression on my face.

That damn swordsmanship teacher! Why did they do some practice match out of nowhere? You made someone faint! Can't you take your nose out of your ass?! Aren't you a teacher?!

"Uh…"

Ellen grabbed my shoulder as I was struggling to get up.

"……?"

Were you trying to cheer me up?

"I didn't know you didn't know swordsmanship."

Ellen lifted me up and helped me put on my shoes, while she was talking in a sullen voice.

Wha, what's wrong with her?

"Originally, I planned to aim for your neck after you blocked my sword and let my sword flow down your sword to finish it."

"……I, see."

Her original plan was to force me to block with a straight strike then let her sword follow the flow down my blade and aim for my neck.

However, I couldn't even react to the first hit, so she accidentally hit my head with her sword.

In other words, this was an unexpected accident. An accident that occured because I was unexpectedly weak, that is.

So.

Was she doing this because she felt sorry?

"Ah, Look. I think I can walk on my own now…"

At my words, she lowered her arm supporting me. I had a headache, but I wasn't badly hurt. Anyway, how long had I been out?

"Ah, don't we have to go to our next lecture?"

Ellen shook her head at my words.

"It's lunch time now."

After the two lectures in the morning, it was usually lunch time. The second lecture was already over, and it was lunch time now so there was still plenty of time.

No.

Did that mean we were going to eat together?

Probably not. She was just answering the questions I asked. I mean, I confessed to her yesterday, got dumped and today she one hitted me.

That wasn't even a fight, it was a one sided beating actually.

I couldn't feel any more shame. However, the other person didn't seem to care much, making me feel even more embarrassed.

"……Do you want to have lunch?"

"……"

-Nod

What I had come to realize is that after you pass a certain level of shame, it just didn't matter that much anymore.

* * *

At first, she seemed like a quiet kid indifferent to most things.

Yesterday, I confessed to her and she refused me, but right now I felt conflicted, because I asked that same kid to have lunch together with me now. I wasn't that kind of person usually.

The kind of person that didn't give meaning to anything.

She ate when she was hungry and didn't care who she ate with. Thinking like that made my worries go away…

I just had to treat her however I wanted to as well. Unless I did something rude enough for her to slap me, that was just it.

Because that was how she was.

Thinking like that made my head clear. She was the type of person who would react the same no matter what happened, so it should be alright for me to treat her a bit more comfortably than the other kids, right?

Because she didn't misunderstand me and didn't have any preconceived notions about me, she just judged me as I was.

"Is there anything you want to eat?"

"Anything's fine."

Eh?

"Are you really fine with anything?"

“Yeah, anything’s fine.”

No matter how much I thought about it, this wasn’t your fault, but you dumped me and hit me.

I started to feel like teasing you a bit.

Be prepared.

* * *

Since this place was similar to Seoul, there were places similar to the one’s found in Seoul in the Imperial Capital Gardium.

Maybe that’s why there were so many familiar things. For example, the beggars found in the Han River Park or the shopping street that was so reminiscent of the Yongsan District.

And yesterday, when I went out to this street to meet Kono Lint, I found something I was shocked to see here.

Wasn’t that almost enough to make my whole worldview collapse? It was what I truly wanted.

Ellen tilted her head at the sight of this food.

“It smells strange.”

Cheonggukjang.

Ellen was unable to take her hands from her nose when she saw the cheonggukjang in an earthen pot.

A musty, savory smell permeated the entire store.

I had no idea why, but it existed.

Why did you exist? Well, it was what I wanted the most right now.

Anyway, It was the food of my hometown! I was so happy to get to eat it again, no

matter what!

And that's how I brought her here.

What's the matter? You said you'd eat anything, you know? Huh?

If you're scared just run away then.

"This smells like something I shouldn't eat."

I shook my head at Ellen's words and pointed at the people who filled the store.

"The people here eat it normally, you know?"

Of course, all of them were adults as well as faculty members. Ellen tilted her head as she looked at the people eating.

– Temple sure is good. They even have eastern dishes here.

-There are people from all over the world coming here. So yeah.

Apparently, this was described as eastern food, although I had no idea about that setting. However, because Temple attracted students from all over the world, they had to prepare a lot of traditional food that one would usually not find anywhere but it's place of origin. If there there was demand, there would be supply. It was more expensive than somewhere else maybe, but where else would one go to get this kind of food?

Well, that was pretty plausible.

It was comparable to a New York food alley. As there were people from all over the world coming they sold a lot of international food.

Anyway, cheonggukjang is one thing, but this was probably the first time that I felt happy that jjamppong and kimchi existed in this world.

So did they also have kimchi stew and army stew?

No, wouldn't it be weird for there to be army stew? There were no American soldiers in this world, so how could there be food introduced by the US army?

No, if one thought about it, cheonggukjang also had its origin somewhere else, right?

What the hell was going on with this place?

Where was I even?

“Come on, look.”

I started mixing the rice with the cheonggukjang, which I took out of the earthenware pot, sprinkled seaweed powder and sesame oil on it and then began to eat.

Ellen watched me eat with a weary expression on her face.

Are you discriminating against another culture right now? Do you want to get into trouble?

To be honest, this wasn’t really my favorite food, but it was something I kind of needed from time to time. She just continued to watch me eat in delight.

Although it had a strong smell, I finally got to experience the taste of my hometown again after a long time.

I was kind of touched by it, although not to the point of tears.

What?

This place actually made some great kimchi.

That was it. The meaning of life.

As expected, I was still an old man at my core.

Did they have soju? They wouldn’t sell it to kids, huh?

Ellen was staring blankly at me with a long, thoughtful look in her eyes.

“Hey, Give that to me. I’ll do it for you.”

I took her bowl of cheonggukjang, mixed everything in her bowl, scooped up a

spoonful and carried it towards her mouth.

“Open up. Try it.”

“Ah, uhm. Erm.”

Ellen repeatedly opened her small lips, perhaps because of the stinging smell rising up into her nose. Her eyebrows and lips twitched, seeming as if she even doubted whether this was really human food.

Looking at her reaction she seemed like a fish opening and closing its mouth. pretty cute, wasn’t it?

“Ah, my arm’s gonna fall off, man!”

“Ah, ah…”

When I complained, Ellen finally opened her mouth and I put the spoonful of cheonggukjang into it.

That was revenge for her hitting me.

Ellen chewed a bit of it with an uncertain look on her face.

“He,hehe. How’s that? Feeling limp already?”

“!”

Ellen squeezed her eyes shut as she put it in her mouth whole with a frown on her face.

It seemed like her feelings of rejection maximized after she put it in her mouth.

Unable to spit or swallow, Ellen started stamping her feet.

A blunt, chic and beautiful 17-year-old girl?

Hah, there’s no such thing as a permanent concept!

CHAPTER 34

Eventually, Ellen swallowed it by pressing hard on her mouth, too afraid to make a fool out of herself by spitting it out. Perhaps because of the savory taste of the cheonggukjang, Ellen drank from her water several times.

“Why… Does it smell so much…”

Ellen continued to drink her water, while I continued to eat without being fazed. Ellen looked at me strangely as well as the other people eating it.

You would end up like that as well if you ate it a few more times.

Seeing me and the other people eat it with such fresh expressions, Ellen scooped up another spoonful and took it to her mouth with a slightly puzzled expression.

“……”

Then, with a regretful expression on her face, she was unable to spit it out again, forcibly chewed it and swallowed it.

“Am… I the strange one…?”

Ellen muttered blankly to herself, her lips trembling slightly.

She couldn’t eat it, but other people around her were eating it normally, so she was wondering if something was wrong with her.

It’s fine.

That was just the type of food it was to begin with! I hated it as well as a kid!

It tasted like shit, but then one day I suddenly…

Ah. Cheonggukjang.

Do I want that? I do!

Everyone around my age is eating it after all!

That was how it started, man.

Ellen wasn't exactly normal either.

Even though she ate it and greatly regretted it, she still went on to eat half of her portion though she couldn't finish all of it after one or two sips of water, as if she was confused as to how people could eat it so easily.

'Wow. This is so incomprehensible.'

'Argh! Maybe like this? Will it taste delicious this time? Do I have to eat it again?'

"Urg…"

'Every time I put it in my mouth, urgh!'

That's how her thought process probably looked like. The face she pulled was just too funny.

What. Did she have a child's palate?

It was a bonus that the humble owner of this shop halved the price for us, impressed that children were eating choenggukjang so well.

* * *

"I'm not eating that again."

After we left the restaurant, Ellen returned to her usual chic expression.

Oh my.

"You ate well for that."

"There's a strange smell… coming from my mouth…"

"Does it smell like shit?"

"……"

Ellen glared at me for a moment at my shameless remark.

Ellen narrowed her eyes as if she could smell her own breath. Yes, and one day, this moment would suddenly flash past her as part of her black history, wouldn't it?

"Why does it smell like that?"

Ellen was deep in thought, as she couldn't understand why people would eat something that smelled like that, but what came out of her mouth was a more basic question.

"You aren't supposed to eat this, right?"

"Hey, why would they sell something one isn't supposed to eat and actually have a lot of people pay for it?"

"……Right."

"It's edible, so I ate it."

Did I look like such a perverted bastard? My novels were all innocent, you know?

No.

If one thought about it, the genre already changed after I took a beautiful 17-year-old girl to eat cheonggukjang which she had never tried before. That in itself made me seem like a crazy perv, didn't it?

If someone caught me doing this, wouldn't they call this torture? No, but I didn't force her to eat it. She ate it willingly. She later even ate more and did this to herself.

Not caring about me suddenly scaring myself like that, Ellen nodded blankly. She didn't say anything for a while. Maybe her curiosity had been sated. I was starting to worry that her character maybe collapsed…

No, what would happen if something like that collapsed? Wouldn't the entire main story get completely destroyed?

“I’ll go that way.”

After walking for a while Ellen pointed to the tram route she had to take to get to her next lecture. I had to go somewhere else.

“Ah.”

Then Ellen turned around and pointed her finger at me.

“Be careful with your head.”

“Oh.”

Said the culprit who whacked my head.

As such, the 17-year-old beautiful girl disappeared from my view, leaving behind the savory smell of cheonggukjang.

* * *

My next class was Magic Theory. There were 4 students of Royal Class present in that lecture. A-10 Cayer, B-2 Louis Ancton, B-5 Christina and B-6 Anna de Gerna.

As soon as Cayer saw me, he turned his head away as if he hadn’t even noticed me and I wasn’t acquainted with any of the students from Class B.

That B-2 Louis Ancton guy, was a jerk who had a knack for being a snitch, so he probably told the teacher about that fight yesterday.

I just let it go. I wasn’t really that fond of fighting and he wasn’t that bad of a guy, now was he?

Currently five of my classmates were majoring in magic. Three of them were attending this class. Three of them were here right now, so why were there four people listening to this lecture?

B-2 Louis Ancton had no talent for magic. He was an unusual guy who studied magic even though he knew he wouldn’t be able to become a wizard.

I did mention that there were people like that.

People who couldn't use magic but studied the science behind it.

Those people were called magic researchers.

Louis had the talent 'Academic' which was the highest talent in the field of research. He wasn't that physically capable, but he was smarter than no other.

So he couldn't become a wizard, but he still pursued the study of magic.

The magic class was quite different from what I expected.

I first thought I wouldn't be able to understand a thing, but it wasn't that difficult to understand the proper terms, including jargon, because my knowledge seemed to be on the middle school level.

The formulas were a bit difficult for me, but it wasn't like I couldn't keep up at all.

What? Were there maybe still hopes for me to become a wizard?

Magic was said to be the study meant for geniuses, but did it maybe feel easier for me because there was already an intelligence correction applied to me?

Come to think of it, that might actually be the case.

Would I have been able to grasp this with my original level of intelligence?

Or did Ellen's hit to my head have some effect on me? Surprisingly, I had no idea what happened. Maybe it would be a bad idea to aim to become a wizard if I already had intelligence correction applied to me while only barely being able to understand magic…

"Of course, this is only the basic level, but keep in mind that moving from theory to praxis will be much harder than just grasping the concept. You have to think carefully if you want to join the magic major. Also keep in mind the other students before you that have chosen this major. The Magic major brings forth a lot of failures as well."

Ah.

That's right.

I guess this was comparable to me thinking that Seoul National University would be a piece of cake while solving some elementary school tests.

So, I was taking notes with the mindset that I would try as best as I could for the time being. It was better to use my head here, then do physical training at least.

Then after a while.

The teacher started explaining the existence of other types of magic systems.

"…As a typical example, demons implement magic in a completely different way from us because their mana system is completely different from ours. We still have to do more research on the subject of the demon's magic. However, even if we were able to learn how to use magic like them, we cannot be sure that we would be able to use it exactly like them."

Hearing that, my mind went blank.

What was I even doing up until now?

Come to think of it, even if I were to learn magic here, I wouldn't be able to use it at all, right? I had to go to Eleris to learn magic, and not to this place, didn't I?

Why was I even staying here knowing it would be fruitless?

"Oh, student? Where are you going?"

Let's make a clean cut.

"Ah, I don't think magic'll work out for me. Teacher!"

I decided to drop it!

* * *

The next day.

The first lecture.

Magic Sensitivity Training.

“Gather the consciousness all over your body… Clear the mind…”

I was lying on a mat with my eyes closed. I could faintly hear the teacher’s voice reaching my ears.

-Now… Imagine the Universe is you…

What?

-Take a deep breath… Breath in… Breath out…

Spirit treatment?

-Put your mind at ease…

Wasn’t this yoga?

– Your body is becoming one with the univeeeeerse…

Wasn’t that similar to the first line? Huh? No matter how I looked at it, that guy was just some charlatan.

-Feel iiiiit…

The teacher’s languid voice, sounding as if he drank alcohol starting this morning, made my whole body feel tired and relaxed, as if he was using hypnosis.

-Now… The world is you… And yooou are the woooorld…

Oh.

-Feel it… The origin of this world… Maaaaagic… Ahh…

-With your whole body… Accept it… You feel so comfortable… Your mind… feels heavy… It’s going to siiiiink… Oh… Like this…

– Your consciousness… Is gradually… Getting further away… You feel sleepy…

After the Magic Sensitivity Training, conducted by this teacher that looked exactly like the head of a yoga class, was over, everyone looked like they had just woken up.

“That would be all for today. I hope you all have a magical day.”

However, the teacher didn’t really say much to us after we woke up and just told us to go out as the class was over.

This Magic Sensitivity Training was an exclusive class for the Royal Class. Wednesday’s lectures were usually only classes exclusive to the Royal Class. They were classes effectively taught in smaller groups.

Except for supernatural power and divinity majors, it was normal for everyone to receive Magic Sensitivity Training. So with the exception of a few, every student of Class A and B were gathered here.

“What…?”

“I know…”

“Huh, what the-?”

Everyone looked as if they just were possessed by a ghost. I was just listening to what he said, but everyone seemed to have fallen asleep.

“I heard that this class was very satisfying. I bet something will happen.”

Bertus also yawned as if he had just woken up, and then laughed.

I didn’t think that a class that only required one to sleep would have a low satisfaction rating, but…

I didn’t really know if this had anything to do with magic sensitivity.

Anyway, it was an easy class, so it was fine.

* * *

The next class was Meditation, it wasn’t a class exclusive to supernatural power users, but many with supernatural powers attended it. It was important for anyone to be able to keep one’s composure. So, of course, it wasn’t just for supernatural power users.

Four of my classmates had supernatural powers.

A-3, Liana de Grantz, Electrokinesis.

A-6, Heinrich von Schwarz, Pyrokinesis.

A-8, Kono Lint, Teleportation.

B-7, Ibia Telepathy.

There was one more person who took the meditation class even though they didn't have supernatural powers.

He had white skin as dry as anchovies, which made one feel bad for him.

However the look in his eyes seemed a bit dangerous.

B-8, Dettomolian.

His talents were witchcraft and spirituality.

He came from a primitive tribe calling the northern snowfields their home. A guy who got admitted with a talent for an ancient form of magic called witchcraft.

However, there was no way for Temple to have a curriculum on something like witchcraft only few practiced. However, Dettomolian wanted to enter Temple under the pretext of studying witchcraft on his own. He said he wanted to study in a safe and well-maintained environment.

He looked insidious and was actually shunned just like Scarlett.

He could also see ghosts.

He was currently doing meditation not to control his mind, but to communicate with the spiritual world.

There should have been only five people in total…

"Charlotte de Gardias."

“Yes.”

Charlotte also signed up for the meditation class. They called us for attendance, which was rather fast as there were only few attending this class in the first place.

This suggested the possibility that Charlotte had a supernatural power. I had no contact with Class B, so I still didn’t know what talent Charlotte had.

Of course, her taking mediation classes didn’t mean that she absolutely had supernatural powers.

I wasn’t exactly a supernatural power user yet either.

But Trauma.

Awakening supernatural powers under extreme psychological pressure.

Obviously, if Charlotte had a latent supernatural ability, she definitely would have awakened it in the Demon Realm.

However, if she had supernatural powers, why didn’t Charlotte use them then? She was in immediate danger, so wouldn’t she have used it in that situation, even if it was on accident?

Or did she awaken, but didn’t know how to use it or couldn’t control it?

No, maybe she really didn’t have supernatural powers to begin with?

The meditation class went on, and I went into meditation with such questions spinning in my mind.

-Tak!

“Ouch!”

“Focus.”

Of course, I couldn’t properly meditate with such things floating around my mind.

CHAPTER 35

My next class was Psychic Control.

With this I couldn't help but be sure.

"Charlotte de Gardias."

"Yes."

Charlotte had a supernatural power. What kind of ability did she possess?

"……Reinhardt. "

"Yes."

As they called my attendance, the supernatural power teacher looked at me confused.

"This was Mr. Epinhauser's request, so I accepted it, but… You don't have any supernatural abilities, do you?"

"Yes."

"I heard that your aptitudes were very multi-faceted… I don't know how I could teach you… How to awaken a supernatural ability…"

The teacher looked perplexed and the other students also looked at me strangely. It was as if an herbivore came to an all-you-can-eat meat buffet.

"It'll work out somehow."

"Huh…"

Including the Teacher and Charlotte…

Everyone was looking at me, dumbfounded.

* * *

-Bzzzt! Crackle!

“Excellent, Miss Grantz. You have the best control out of everyone in class.”

“Thank you.”

“Try to increase your power output in that state little by little.”

Liana de Grantz sighed in relief as she succeeded to let sparks bounce between the index fingers of both her hands.

Unpredictable things could happen in the supernatural power control class so the teachers were teaching the students one on one.

-Flaaare!

“Good. Now let’s see how long you can maintain it.”

“Yes.”

Heinrich von Schwartz, who succeeded in lighting a fire on sand, was sweating profusely trying to maintain his concentration.

-Wo, woah! Don’t look!

-I’m not seeing anything. Anything at all. Lint. Get dressed.

And I could hear Kono Lint’s screams coming not from the classroom, but the containment room, followed by the teacher’s fed up voice.

Kono Lint.

Although he was a total playboy, he had a pretty fraudulent ability, that is, the ability to teleport his body.

But his biggest problem was that he couldn’t teleport his clothes as well. So the biggest side effect of his power was that every time he used it, he’d end up naked.

He was often teased that his ability could only be used in public baths.

Naked Teleportation. I kind of wanted it, but on the other hand, not at all.

It wasn't a bad ability to have.

"You're going to go to Main Street to have crepe for lunch today. Is that correct?"

"Yes."

"I'm going to go outside now. Try it again then.""

"Yes."

And B-7 Ibia was using her telepathic abilities. The ability to send her own thoughts into the mind of an opponent. They seemed to be doing a range test at the moment.

"Reinhardt…"

"Yes. Teacher."

"What do we do now?"

My teacher had a perplexed look on his face as if he didn't know what to do with me who didn't have a supernatural power at all.

I would find it weird as well if I were in his shoes. This was a place where supernatural ability users were trying to control and improve their abilities, not to awaken them. So my teacher was at a loss.

"Please put me under extreme psychological pressure."

"Pardon?"

"One might awaken a supernatural power in an emergency, right?"

"Wha, what?"

"So, you don't have to actually try to kill me, just push me to the brink of death and…?"

“Don’t ask for something so strange!”

The teacher freaked out, as if I was saying something completely outlandish.

That teacher straight up refused, saying that he couldn’t torture a student like that. He also added that there were times when one awakened to a supernatural power in such situations, but that wasn’t always the case. If that were the case, the world would be full of supernatural power users.

No.

I know that.

Actually, I did have a supernatural power.

No matter how hard I tried to persuade them, they didn’t seem to want to listen to me, so I just observed the class.

And.

Charlotte.

“……”

Charlotte was taken somewhere by her dedicated teacher after the class started. Were they doing an ability check in the containment room like they did with Kono Lint? Was it a type of ability that should not be seen by others? I looked at the teacher and asked.

“What type of supernatural ability does the Princess have?”

I was just asking. Casually. You could ask such things out of curiosity, right? That’s what I thought anyway.

“I don’t know.”

However, the teacher just shrugged.

“It’s a secret or something…”

Confidential.

It was then that I understood why no one was talking about Charlotte's ability.

Charlotte had awakened to a supernatural ability.

And no one knew what type it was, except a few teachers.

* * *

I had no other option but to silently wait until the class was over. Charlotte, who went somewhere and returned shortly before the class ended, looked tired.

The Princess' ability was confidential. Maybe her classmates didn't know either. For some reason they treated her abilities like some state secret…

Mr. Mustrang and the teacher in charge of her ability training were probably in the know.

Did Mr. Epinhauser know?

Charlotte was a supernatural ability user, and any talk about her abilities was under lock and key.

If so, I should also consider the possibility that she didn't actually have one.

There was also the possibility that she may have faked powers she didn't have in order to get into Temple as a member of the Royal Class. Well, whether that was possible or not is another question.

So, did Bertus know what ability the Princess held? It was getting more and more troublesome. If the Princess didn't have any abilities and Bertus knew, then he wouldn't have a reason to stay silent about that. So, by that we can conclude that Bertus either also knew the Princess' supernatural power or he didn't know yet, no matter if the Princess had one or not.

As the class was over, the teacher called me over.

"Reinhardt."

“Yes.”

“I will allow you to join the class for now, but keep in mind that you will receive failing marks if you decide to continue.”

“Yeah, well, there’s nothing I can do about that.”

There was no way a person without a supernatural ability could be given any kind of grade in a class focused on supernatural abilities.

When I nodded my head gently, everyone was looking at me as if I was crazy. No, well, I did get that they wouldn’t have any other choice but to fail me like this.

I had no intentions of failing though.

After class everyone left the classroom.

“Hey, No. 11.”

And then, someone called out to me.

“Huh, what?”

It was A-6 Heinrich von Schwarz who called me. I could see at first glance that he wore a bad kind of expression on his face and everyone started to stand by and decided to watch what was going on. Charlotte was already gone though. She seemed tired after all.

“Is Temple a joke to you?”

He looked pretty uncomfortable, even if I pretended not to notice. It was the same for the others who gave me dirty looks.

“No?”

“Then why does a person who doesn’t have supernatural abilities worm their way into classes for supernatural ability users?”

Why was that bastard asking something so obvious right now?

“Because I want to awaken one.”

At those words, the expressions of the other kids, including Heinrich’s, changed drastically as if they just heard something absurd.

“Do you seriously think that’s possible?”

“What’s the big deal? You never know if you don’t try.”

Heinrich frowned as if he couldn’t stand it any longer.

“I heard you’re attending all major’s lectures, right?”

“That I do.”

“Do you seriously think you could do anything just because of your infinite aptitudes? You really believe that? Huh? You want to be a supernatural power user. Hah! Do you think you can be a Swordmaster or Wizard just because you want to?”

The other students looked uncomfortable as well. Yeah, it did look somewhat bad, huh?

“I’m just doing this because I think I might get something out of it.”

“Haah…”

He looked exasperated.

“Never mind, just don’t come to the supernatural power lectures anymore. If you come again, I’ll grill you, you know?”

It seemed like he didn’t like the fact that I was taking the supernatural power classes. It looked like Heinrich tried to intimidate me by telling me he’d grill me.

“Grill what? You wouldn’t even be able to grill a potato.”

“What?”

“That’s my estimate after watching the size of your flame. Don’t you agree?”

He did make some fire burn in the sand, but it was definitely not as good as a bonfire.

Heinrich turned red at my words.

“What a great ability you have. If all you can do is make your eye color change and make a somewhat big fire with your arms trembling, wouldn’t a flint be much more useful than you?”

“Wha, wha… What? Thi, this…”

“Would you like to compete with it? You or a flint? Which one would be better? I expect a landslide victory for the flint. Flints don’t run their smelly mouths like you do.”

Heinrich, whom I compared to a flint, was stammering, probably never having imagined to get insulted like that.

“N, n, now… D, do… Do you, even… know who you are in, insulting right now?”

That guy eventually said some words that should never be said in here after getting pushed a little.

“The one I’m insulting is A-6 Heinrich von Schwarz. No matter how much you are of some fucking noble family, who’d care about that in Temple?”

“How dare you insult the royalty of the First Principality, subject to the Heave-…”

I raised my hand as I watched him chatter on.

“Ah, you should apologize to me.”

“Wha, what…?”

“You’re not supposed to mention your status in Temple. Did you forget that rule?”

I looked around at the spectators watching us with stunned expressions.

Everyone who took the class, except Charlotte, were here. Kono Lint, Liana de Grantz, and even Ibia, were watching from afar.

“We have witnesses here. Did you hear everything?”

Heinrich’s face turned blue as he realized that he had just broken that rule in his excitement. Everyone suddenly looked away and frowned, when I was asking for witnesses.

“If you don’t apologize to me in three seconds, I’ll report it to the student council.”

“Ooone.”

“Twooo.”

“Threeee.”

I turned around with that momentum. One more rule violated.

“Sorry… I was acting too reckless.”

He was a little late, but I smiled at him as he did give me an answer straight out.

Why would you start an argument if you can’t even finish it?

“Watch your mouth next time, buddy.”

I tapped his shoulder and whispered.

“This is a place where royals wouldn’t be able to complain, even if they get beat up by a commoner.”

“Wha… What?”

“That means, if you do, things will be turned right back at you regardless of your status.”

No matter what status he held, he wasn’t even good enough to be a portable lighter here. Just when I was about to go past him, I heard him hitting the back of my head.

“How dare you, you cheeky bastard!”

“Ah, what now?”

The color in his eyes was getting more saturated.

He looked like he was turning on a faucet. It seemed like he was trying to use his power.

“Frickin hell.”

-Slap!

“Ugh!”

I casually walked over to him and hit his forehead with my palm. Of course, he staggered and was unable to use his ability like he intended to. I disturbed his concentration after all.

“Ah…? Huh?”

He looked like he didn’t understand what happened just now. It was like something that shouldn’t have happened, had happened and he couldn’t even articulate properly.

It almost looked like he had question marks in his eyes.

“I’m gonna give it to you, you fucktard.”

Didn’t these kids know that a fist would be way faster? Everyone was watching me blackly as I casually smacked the Prince of the First Principality. He seemed astonished beyond absurdity.

“Ho, how… How dare that bastard touch my body!”

“It was legitimate self-defence. Weren’t you trying to burn me just now?”

He stared at me trembling while I just stood there nonchalantly.

“Hey, didn’t you want to grill me? Huh? Go ahead. Try.”

“I will kill you!”

The color in his eyes got more saturated again.

-Smack!

“Urgh!”

“Did you think I would wait for you to charge up, you idiot?”

Was he stupid?

“Every time you try to use your ability, you’ll get a smack in the face. Okay? I’m nice, so I’ll keep it a secret that my dear classmate tried to attack me with his ability. Huh? You do know what a pain it’ll be if I report this, right?”

“I, I, Iiiiiiirrrrrk!”

“What are you doing? Didn’t you want to kill me? Come on.”

“Huup!”

As soon as I raised my hand, he started holding his breath and pulled his head back.

“What a little coward.”

“Y, yo… You dog-like bastard…”

Heinrich’s face was flushed red. It seemed like he was terribly embarrassed by the fact that he got scared.

Eventually, he couldn’t endure his anger anymore and rushed at me.

-Crash!

“Ugh!”

I smoothly took that childish rush of his and threw him off.

There was no way that a well-bred royal knew how to fight. He was also a supernatural power user.

“Well, you think you can manage with your body alone?”

– Stomp!

“Hey, hey! How about trying to get rid of these dirty feet of mine, huh?”

I turned to the spectators who didn’t even have time to close their mouths as I stepped on Heinrich’s head.

“You guys clearly saw him trying to use his power on me, didn’t you? Huh?”

Liana de Grantz was staring blankly. Kono Lint was almost trembling.

They never imagined seeing such a scoundrel in this place.

Anyway, that was that, but having a fight with a classmate and using their powers on a classmate were two crimes of very different magnitudes.

“I know you have a lot of pride, but do it in moderation, you hear?”

I mumbled coldly as I stepped on his head.

“Was I hurting you? I was just quietly taking this class. So why did you have to pick a fight with someone who was just staying quiet? The way I see it, shouldn’t you be grateful to me? As I don’t have any supernatural powers, aren’t I laying the groundwork here?”

I squatted down, grabbed Heinrich’s hair and whispered into his ear.

“Your ability’s range currently is 5 meters across, it takes 10 seconds of preparation time and its firepower is less than a bonfire.”

“!”

I observed today’s class. So, as Heinrich and Liana continued to learn how to use their abilities, I practically had no other choice but to figure out the extent of their abilities.

As I accurately gasped the extent of his powers, he opened his eyes wide, almost tearing them apart.

“If you try to use your powers on me one more time in the future…”

How could I stay still when I had nothing. If someone would stand completely still in front of someone who clearly despised you while not possessing anything, that would be asking to get yourself killed.

“At that time, if I don’t suddenly change my mind in those 10 second, I might as well rip out your eyeballs.”

“……!”

“Didn’t Mr. Epinhauser say it before? Huh? Let’s be careful of each other.”

If you didn’t do anything and just endured it, you will be looked down upon.

Being a fool was acceptable, but one should never be a pushover.

CHAPTER 36

On the first day I had to beat up Cayer.

And on the third day I had to beat up Heinrich von Schwarz. This time, I wasn't called to see the teacher. If I were called in, I would just testify that he tried to use his ability on his classmate, although it would be a pain.

However, this was different from the time with Cayer.

Cayer was a commoner, Heinrich von Schwarz was the prince of Kernstadt, the first Principality of the Empire. Although he wasn't its successor, he was still a descendant.

In other words, he was a descendant of the royal family, who had the second highest authority after the Imperial Family. This would be seen a shocking event by anyone, no matter how much they enforced the principle of equality and treated everyone fairly regardless of class.

Rather than criticizing me, it seemed like everyone was avoiding me. They seemed to perceive me as a madman, someone actually crazy. At this point they didn't see me as just something dirty, rather I turned into a scary existence in their eyes.

No, I mean, should I have let go of that guy who suddenly started arguing with me and tried to use his ability on me just because he couldn't stand the sight of me sitting still? Should I have actually gotten grilled, huh?

After that, Heinrich would leave his seat as soon as he saw me, as if he saw something dirty. It seemed like he turned around in fury and anger, but he couldn't raise his hand against me in Temple.

I didn't want to be seen as a pushover, so I became a nut job.

Because if I didn't do this, some genuinely strong person might want to pick a fight with me. It would only be a matter of time before that would turn into a bloodbath, right? If that were to happen, I should absolutely get an ability I could actually use.

Would my slow attacks even do anything against someone with a combat talent?

My quiet life had been ruined, by none other than myself. So I had no other choice but take this route. It would be completely useless to pretend to be nice and kind to these people.

And thinking back about it.

I didn't think that I was ever really nice before. I mean, someone who gets actually mad at some kids in their thirties definitely had some problem with their head, right?

The atmosphere of Class A, which had always been quiet, became even worse because of me.

Did I actually become a type of villain in the story I wrote? I didn't do this on purpose, you know?

No matter how one looked at it, I was the bad guy here.

An initial villain who had no real power but a bad temper, right?

After Thursday's common classes, evening.

"Reinhardt, could I talk with you for a second?"

After dinner, Bertus finally called out to me.

* * *

After dinner, Bertus took me to a patio tea table. He still had a friendly smile on his lips. On the table was a teapot filled with black tea. He probably prepared this beforehand.

"Do you want some tea?"

"Well, sure."

Bertus poured the tea gently into my cup. He put milk into his tea, while I just drank it as is. The Prince didn't seem to have any hostility towards me.

I couldn't figure out what he thought about me being so casual with him by his expression alone.

I didn't let my guard down because his expression didn't tell me anything.

He was an aspiring Swordmaster. Those who picked a fight with me were mostly physically weaker than me. However, the Prince was someone who could step all over me if he so wanted. Both physically and politically.

I wasn't his match in either of those aspects.

If Bertus tried to impose physical sanctions on me…

How should I respond?

It was the right decision to just become one of those typical strong against the weak and weak against the strong types.

Bertus looked at me with a soft smile.

A friendly attitude that seemed devoid of hostility.

Ludwig was deceived by that attitude. Countless other people were, too.

It was a soft smile that could even deceive me, who shouldn't be deceived by it.

"They were all asking me to do something about this matter, so I've decided to speak on their behalf with you."

"About what?"

"They are afraid of you."

He euphemistically said they were scared of me, but in the end they simply didn't like me.

"Of course, I can understand your behavior to a certain extent. On the first day, Cayer was rather aggressive towards you. Even in the changing room."

"……"

“I’m sure it was also Cayer’s fault for saying that your admission was of fraudulent nature.”

The Imperial Prince.

It wasn’t me, but the Prince who was upset by Cayer’s remarks that undermined Temple’s authority. Did you feel refreshed inwardly after you came to stop the fight?

“I heard that you acted because you were indignant about him insulting Temple, not you personally.”

Whether he heard it from Mr. Epinhauser or through other channels, he knew about my appeal. That’s why Bertus knew I pretended to be a patriot.

“As a student of Temple I have to look at every person fairly. I have no choice but to. Although it is true that my heart is drawn towards such patriotic people.”

What?

What’s with that weird development?

“Reinhardt, I like you very much.”

This.

The storyline got really weird!

My hands would tremble less if he told me that he was going to kill me.

What’s with this? What direction is this going to? Huh?

Bertus heard what I said to Mr. Epinhauser, and was now admiring my patriotism? No, well, it was a matter of course that the Imperial Prince holds strong patriotism.

So he was looking favorably upon me? Because he thought that I was enduring all these insults towards my person, but would punch out as soon as Temple was insulted because I was that much of a patriot?

Bertus was fiddling with his teacup while still wearing a soft smile.

“Still, I think this time you have gone too far. Of course, touching someone of a royal family is far more dangerous than a commoner. I’m not talking about that point though.”

“……”

“I believe our dear classmates’ imagination is running a bit wild.”

“Imagination?”

What did he mean?

Bertus smiled as he looked at the nightly landscape of Temple as if he could see something beyond the horizon.

“There is no way that a man with no talent whatsoever would ever touch the House of Schwarz with nothing to rely on… That is what they are spreading.”

I began to understand what he meant. ‘*Even if he was crazy, he’s so crazy that there has to be something behind him*‘, that’s what they thought.

“So… They think I’m hiding something huge?”

“Correct. It could be a talent or it could be the power of your family…”

“Hmm…”

If I were them I wouldn’t be able to understand my behavior either, if there wasn’t something like that behind me. They thought there couldn’t be someone out there, not even a madman, who would beat up someone of a royal family out of rage.

“It’s not common, but there are people like that. People who hide their own status and enter Temple as commoners.”

I knew about that. There were students who couldn’t live under their family name or those who had to hide their background for various other reasons, for example they don’t want to get noticed. There were even such cases where they send a young nobleman here as a commoner, hiding his family background, and what he was met with was utter contempt, as such receiving true education.

I was mistaken as someone like that.

“What’s worse, even Heinrich is starting to believe it.”

“……Hah?”

Recently, Heinrich had been avoiding me, pretending to sleep as soon as he saw me. It wasn’t because he thought I was dirty, but because he truly thought I was scary?

“By the way, how many families are there that aren’t afraid of the Schwarz family?”

Things were going into a completely different direction I expected it to. They thought I had some background that would enable me to punch someone of the Schwarz Royal Family without a care.

If so, wouldn’t there be only one option then?

“I believe the others think you are the hidden son of a Royal Family.”

A child’s imagination was sometimes even beyond an adults understanding. No, what stupid idiot would send their hidden son into an environment with two members of the Imperial Family?

“Huh…”

“Of course, I know that’s not true.”

Bertus looked at me as if he wasn’t such a fool to believe in the trivial imaginations of children.

Then he tilted his cup, still having that gentle smile float on his lips.

“So, Reinhardt, let me ask you a question.”

“What?”

“Is there something you can place your trust in?”

Bertus knew that me being from a Royal Family was nonsense. However he still was curious. About my true background. Even Bertus didn’t seem to believe that I was

just some ruthless guy in the end.

However, the nature of my background could never be revealed. As it was on the level of turning the entire human race against me.

“As if.”

I sighed and folded my arms.

“I don’t need some crazy background to punch some fucker who’s trying to walk all over me, now do I?”

I’ll just go with that route.

It was already too late to fix this anyway. I’m sticking with the nut job route. So what if I hung some dog-bastard out to dry?

I also had the Dreadfiend ring, so I could disappear any time I wanted.

Bertus looked at me blankly with a slightly dumbfounded expression.

“Huh… You mean… I don’t think it’s… So, you don’t have something like that?”

“Yeah.”

“You just did that because you were in a bad mood?”

“Yeah.”

“Huh… Hah.”

Bertus, who had been smiling all this time, slightly licked his lips.

“Haha, ha. Hahaha. Hahahaha. Haha!”

Then he suddenly burst into laughter. Bertus laughed for a long time, like a man who lost his mind.

After laughing for a while, Bertus looked at me.

That look chilled my spine. His eyes felt like those of a snake.

This was Bertus true face. Just by looking at him one could feel goosebumps run up one's back.

He looked at me with those eyes and quietly tilted his teacup.

"In a situation like that, one would usually lie."

It was a lie.

No, it could be seen as a lie, kind of, right? I did have a certain background. Ah.

It might be a background that exceeded anyone's imagination though.

"If you told me you had some great background or something, I would have have ignored you in the future."

Bertus was showing himself to me completely raw. It was completely different from those guys who had been yelling and swearing at me before.

It was indeed a young man's gaze, but it seemed frozen.

"It was wise of you to answer honestly. Reinhardt."

He seemed to have expected me to bluff my way out of this situation. I was just pretending to be that kind of person to not get beat up. Did he do a background check on me? Did he already know that I wasn't actually some big shot, and by saying these things was he trying to find out what kind of person I was?

I shrugged my shoulders.

"I could have lied that there was nothing, though?"

"I don't know if there really is nothing about you, but you aren't a nobleman at least."

Bertus set down his teacup and stroked the rim with his fingers.

"There's no way that a nobleman wouldn't know how to hold a teacup."

The tea wasn't prepared for no reason.

He looked through me just by observing how I held a teacup and drank the tea.

When I realized that my unconscious actions gave away information about my background, I got goosebumps all over my body.

I was the one who set up this character, but it was hard for me to put into words how this guy was scaring me.

If I bragged about my background he would have just ignored me. But I told him that I wasn't much. So what?

"You should have bluffed, Reinhardt."

"Why?"

"Have you ever thought about what Heinrich von Schwarz could do to you?"

I kind of thought about it. Of course, I rushed in with my body first, but I did organize my thoughts later. The price I would have to pay for touching someone of the Royal Family of Kernstadt, the First Principality of the Empire.

However, I knew about Heinrich von Schwarz's background. I was pretty confident that he wouldn't be able to hurt me.

"I did."

"The moment you step out of Temple, you might disappear without any trace for hitting someone from the House of Schwarz. Don't you worry about that?"

"Sure do."

No, I didn't really. Because something like that would never happen in the first place.

"Then when I told you that Heinrich was afraid of your unknown background, wouldn't it have been good if you kept these fears alive?"

"Sure would have been."

“Then why did you tell me the truth? Heinrich is very likely to harm you, and you should feel afraid of that.”

Heinrich was of a Royal Family, rather hostile and joined the Royal Class.

However he was currently more or less in exile.

No one in the Schwarz family looked favorably upon Heinrich. That was why Heinrich’s status was just a shell. In reality, he was just some guy with no power or status.

Therefore, I already knew that there would be no retaliation against me from that family he was practically abandoned by far in the distance.

However, to tell him that I knew about these things would obviously be suspicious.

So why did I deny this misunderstanding that would have kept me safe?

“It wouldn’t have been any good to tell such shallow lies in front of the Imperial Prince.”

It would be better to say that I had foreseen this situation. I judged it to be more dangerous to deceive Bertus in order to keep myself safe from that guy called Heinrich.

That was what I was going for.

At my word, Bertus began to stare at me.

“I could tell Heinrich about this, you know? Wouldn’t that be problematic for you?”

I felt like walking on a thin sheet of ice. Turning Bertus against me would put my life at risk. I decided to use the nut job route, but he wasn’t really picking a fight with me, so there was no reason for me to snap at him.

“I don’t think so.”

“And why is that?”

“You said that when I lied, you would have just ignored me in the future. Then

wouldn't that mean you'd do something if I didn't?"

My hand was just a dog's paw after all.

Then, in this situation, Bertus wouldn't ignore me, but would try to do something.

Maybe he'd offer me a solution.

Maybe he thought something like I wasn't someone he should ignore.

"And I do think Heinrich wouldn't be able to touch me, whatever my background, assuming he's not completely braindead."

"Why do you think so?"

"No matter inside or outside of Temple, it wouldn't be normal for a Temple student, and a Royal Class student at that, to suddenly die in the Imperial Capital Gardium."

"……"

"And if I actually were to die, the culprit would be all too clear. A Royal Class student from a commoner background fought with a member of the First Principality's Royal Family. If someone like that were to die suddenly, it would be very obvious whose knife stabbed him."

If I died with that timing, it would be obvious who killed me, so, of course, Heinrich would be the prime suspect. Bertus was smiling more and more.

"Wouldn't it be possible for the Schwarz Royal Family to use their power to cover up this case?"

"Of course, that might happen."

"……"

"However."

I looked at Bertus and smiled.

I didn't know what would happen, but I couldn't stop now.

“I don’t think our homeland, the Empire, would be swayed just by a Principality. Rather, wouldn’t they be asked to pay for tarnishing Temple’s honor?”

Bertus’ lips began to curl up at the expression ‘homeland’. Was he more patriotic than even Mr. Epinhauser?

Now that I thought about it, my death would be a much bigger deal than I thought. I knew it wouldn’t happen, but I decided to use my confidence in Temple and the Empire as the reason for that belief. Bertus seemed to admire my judgment.

Bertus liked smart guys. He certainly picked up something about me, but it was different from our other classmate’s judgement. Of course, it was because I knew a thing or two about this place’s common sense.

“Great.”

Bertus was grinning as if there was no more need to talk.

“It’s the first time in my life that I came to like a cheeky guy like you so much.”

What? What was with this situation?

“Reinhardt, let’s enjoy our life at Temple together.”

“……Yes.”

Why was the first person I got close at Temple the villain?

CHAPTER 37

Why do you think that the first friend you made at Temple would make a good friend?

Talented Villain.

1. Nice to his subordinates.

2. Would be able to hide me,

So, becoming Bertus' subordinate wouldn't be such a bad thing, but I was still scared. It did have advantages, but wouldn't it look like I'm a double agent? Was he going to treat me like a subordinate in the first place? It would be hard to keep that going for a long time.

If he were to place me under his wing, wouldn't he be the first and only member of the Imperial Family to ever make a Demon Prince their subordinate?

Anyway, Bertus seemed to want to maintain a close relationship with me in our future Temple life.

Of course, I knew Bertus.

He was a talented guy. Whether they were commoners, nobles or royalty, if they had the ability, he would have serious interest in them.

It didn't matter what kind of person they were, as long as they proved to be useful. That was the type of person he was.

Bertus sat on the terrace railing this time. It was on the first floor, so one could go outside from it.

He talked with his back to me.

"Do you love the Empire?"

“Of course.”

That wasn’t a lie. I really did love it. This was the best place to live on the whole continent after all.

“Why do you love it?”

He didn’t like obvious answers.

“Because of money.”

“……What? Money?”

Bertus turned his head to look at me. He’d find out if we continued to be like this anyway, but I had to be a little more honest here.

“There’s no reason not to love a place that allows a helpless beggar to live in a palace like this just because there’s something strange about him.”

“…Beggar?”

“Yeah.”

It wasn’t even on the level of not having any background, kid.

“I’m from the streets.”

I was a beggar!

Bertus opened his mouth slightly as if he had never imagined something like that. That made it clear that this guy didn’t run a background check on me. Bertus didn’t say anything for a moment, perhaps bewildered or perplexed, he nodded blankly as if he came back to his senses.

“Ah, right… Yes… I know what you mean.”

I had been wandering around the streets.

“If you dislike me for being a beggar, it can’t be helped.”

He was fine with commoners, but what about beggars? We weren't just a Prince and a Pauper, we were the Imperial Prince and a Beggar.

"No. I prefer it that way."

However, Bertus gave me an unexpected answer. I couldn't believe it. He preferred it?

"Because there's a strong basis for loyalty."

Not only did I get to live in this place just because I had some form of talent, but it was also possible for me to hold a conversation with the Prince like this.

He seemed to think that one could take my loyalty to the Empire for granted then. Yeah, that certainly was a convincing statement. As if he found it funny that I put it as being loyal because of money, Bertus chuckled.

"I don't know what kind of light hanging out with a beggar would shine on you. Well, my origins aren't exactly a secret or anything."

I told Bertus another point I thought might be a problem. Surely it wouldn't paint a good picture and my origins would spread someday.

"That's ridiculous."

However, Bertus cut me off.

"Reinhardt, do you know about ants?"

"Ah, yeah."

"Did you know that they have a hierarchy in ant society?"

"Like queen ant, worker ant and so on?"

"Yes. Like that."

Bertus was staring outside, as if he was peering through the darkness. Why was he talking about ants out of nowhere?

"Queen ants, worker ants, soldier ants and so on, there might be even more

complicated systems, or none at all, but I don't know about that."

"What about it?"

Were you proud of not knowing that?

"What do I know about classes among ants."

Bertus said coldly.

"Beggars, commoners, nobles, princes, dukes, counts, barons. Why would I care about that?"

That was the type of guy Bertus was.

"They look all the same below me, Reinhardt."

Bertus laughed grimly.

"So, whether Heinrich von Schwarz criticized me or you criticized me."

He had pretty intuitive logic.

"It would be all the same to me."

All were equal below him.

Whether it was a soldier ant or the lowest of those ants trying to criticize him, he wouldn't care either way. He put it in quite the dog-like way, but in the end it meant he didn't care what I was.

He told me not to worry about that and not to be too nervous about these things.

"The core message is great, but the way you put was quite intense."

Look at that twisted bastard.

"That's what power is, Reinhardt."

Bertus giggled.

“Those who have it, have the freedom to be snobbish.”

His choice of words were rather radical. Isn’t it nice being treated comfortably?

The powerful have the freedom to be snobbish.

“However you don’t have that kind of power and yet you are the way you are”

As for Bertus, he seemed interested in me because I was acting frivolous even though I didn’t have any power at all. Because of that, some people judged me to be some mysterious person in the end.

“You’re a beggar and yet you seem to have a good head on your shoulders. Your eloquence isn’t normally found in someone born in poverty.”

“There are all sorts of people in this world.”

Bertus looked at me. It was as if he was trying to peer through me.

“Okay, let’s find out what you are really hiding.”

He seemed convinced that a beggar wouldn’t be capable of that. He’d treat me as a friend, but Bertus was obviously suspicious of me. However, one couldn’t just manipulate my origins.

That said, I didn’t even try acting like a stupid beggar.

I wasn’t all that disappointed, as it was an inevitable result.

In the end, Bertus wouldn’t fully trust my background or rather the lack thereof.

He didn’t tell me to come under him, nor did I say that I would go under him.

“But it is true that I don’t have any abilities. So is there anything about me that you’re interested in so much that you want to get closer to me?”

“Those talents as meager as a rat are useless as of now. That’s not to say that a physical scanner could explain everything about a human being.”

After Bertus revealed his true face, he didn’t pretend to be kind in front of me

anymore. Talents as meager as little rats. Bertus was criticizing the Royal Class students for being useless.

He seemed to think that it was foolish to only believe in what that physical scanner showed. He was focused on indicators that that thing couldn't show.

"I'd prefer someone who could use his head a little better a hundred times over some measly talent. Of course, someone with a good head on their shoulders punching people left and right is rather problematic. Well, as that was how you used to live, I can understand your behavior to some extent."

Bertus chuckled. It seemed like he judged me as someone who was smart and had good judgement, but as soon as someone started to argue with me I would use my fist first. Since I was a beggar, he seemed to think that that was why I acted like that.

No, but…

I wasn't actually a beggar…

"Well, what I wanted to say stays the same, in the end. Try to hold in your temper."

We came back to the beginning and he ended up saying the same thing.

"I'll try, but only if those brats can be communicated with."

"Well, yeah. That's all for now."

Bertus came down form the terrace railing and stood in front of me.

"When I'm sure you're mine, let's talk about some more important things then."

The time for Bertus to trust me.

The time for me to trust Bertus.

That time hadn't come yet.

But Bertus did recognize my worth, which is why he threw out the bait first. Something like "Don't forget who recognized your value first".

I knew without even thinking about it who came first.

* * *

I became friends with Bertus. No, we weren't quite friends yet. Anyway, even if I hadn't quite gained the Imperial Prince's favor yet, it did seem like he saw me in a positive light. I seemed to have been judged as a useful guy.

There weren't any visible effects of that. He wasn't acting too friendly. Of course, we would talk casually, regardless of whether other people saw us or not. There were probably some rumors floating about by now, that the Imperial Prince was kind even so some crazy asshole.

Classes on Friday included Divinity, Alchemy and Synthesis.

Divinity studies were for those gifted with divine powers, so the only ones taking the class were Erich and Ashir from Class B. The rest were all regular class students who wanted to be priest or paladins.

Of course, I understood what they were trying to teach, but I couldn't sense divine power at all. Using divine power as a Demon, would seem pretty funny, wouldn't it?

Everyone who majored in Magic would study Alchemy as well. Unlike magic classes, Alchemy seemed quite doable. It was a fun class because it was a practical one.

General Martial Arts.

I almost fell behind while trying to understand it.

In the end, this was close to P.E. Part 2.

Fortunately no one, except Ludwig, even dared to make eye contact with me. It seemed like the rumor that I was a total nut job went around the Class A and B kids.

When Erich saw me today in Divinity Studies, he seemed to avoid me and that man named Ashir who was also majoring in Divinity from Class B, immediately turned his head as fast as lightening after he made eye contact with me once.

Well.

I wasn't a bully, just some psycho they wanted to avoid.

And the truth behind that rumor of me having some mysterious background still didn't seem to have spread yet.

Did Bertus want the misunderstandings to be resolved on their own?

It was true that I was an ill-tempered person, but I was also talentless. So if a strong guy came along, I was confident that that person, beating me up would set things right, but it seemed like those types of people were avoiding me because of that misunderstanding.

Hidden royalty?

Children and their imagination…

* * *

As a rule, Royal Class students had to live in the dormitory. Of course, since most of the Temple students came from far away countries, most of them lived in Temple, but there were also some Temple students that lived in Gardium, so there were some cases of students commuting to school.

Of course, Temple was huge, so one had to get up very early to leave the school and go outside.

Among the members of the Royal Class, those who had a mansion in Gardium often went home on the weekends. There were no compulsory activities during the weekend. Everyone was free to study, play or do whatever they wanted.

I could stay in the dormitory, but I'd just be alone anyway. I had no clue how to awaken my ability.

Well, I'd better let them know how my first week went.

* * *

Where would I go?

Of course to the Rotary Gang, the sewer area under the Bronzgate Bridge.

"……So, you've been beating up the kids, is what you mean?"

"…so to speak, erm, that's how it was."

When I told Loyar about my Temple life, she looked at me. She seemed to think I hadn't gotten rid of old habits or something. After all, the way I acted kind of felt the same as the original prince, huh?

"No, but it was them who picked the fight. Would I hit the back of the head of someone who was just minding their own business?"

"Ah, yes."

At my plea, Loyar looked at me as if I would do that.

What's with that guy?

"Paw."

-Pat

"Do, don't do this, Your Highness…"

"If you keep looking at me like that, I'll tell you to show me your stomach."

"I, I really don't want to do that, Your Highness…"

She was more straightforward than anyone I knew.

CHAPTER 38

Naturally, Sarkegaar and Eleris weren't here. It was only Loyar. The gang members I met on the way asked me if I was doing fine in Temple, so I answered appropriately.

Of course, I didn't tell them that I was beating up kids.

"I heard the Imperial Prince and Princess entered Temple as well."

"Well, yeah."

"What do you think? Will it be dangerous?"

Loyar seemed worried about me. In a way, just entering Temple was quite the dangerous endeavor, but now two of my classmates were of the Imperial Family.

"So far, everything's fine, but I think the Prince is trying to lure me to his side."

"Hmm… This feels dangerous."

"If things seem to turn south, I'll somehow escape using the ring."

So, I told her not to worry too much about me. Loyar seemed to be worried that my life would be in danger at Temple.

And I didn't only come here to report my life at Temple to her.

"And, there's something I'd like you to look into if you could."

"What is it?"

"Well, it's something Sarkegaar should do, to be exact, not you personally."

I didn't know how far the reach of Count Argon Pontheus was, but Sarkegaar had the ability to transform, so it would be relatively easy for him to gather some information.

“It seems like the Princess has a supernatural ability, and that power is considered to be confidential.”

“…The Princess. You’re telling me she has a supernatural ability?”

“Yeah. I want you to look into that. Of course, there’s no rush. I just feel a bit queasy having something in front of me that’s kept a secret.”

I had a feeling that I needed to know what Charlotte was capable of. Perhaps Loyar hadn’t even thought of that as she furrowed her eyebrows.

I wanted to confirm if that confidential supernatural ability the Princess was said to have, was real, or if it was just a lie fabricated so that she could enter the Royal Class.

If she held a dangerous ability, I had to be careful.

“I will relay the message to Sarkegaar.”

“How is it going with the train vendor strategy, by the way?”

A smile spread across Loyar’s face, hearing my words.

The Rotary Gang had changed their strategy from selling candies to passers-bys to selling goods on trains.

“Very good.”

“Oh, how good exactly?”

Loyar explained to me that their sales had risen to an unprecedented level.

The items they sold also seemed to get good responses as they also sold simple snacks along with candy.

Anyway, it felt rather weird for them to become general merchandisers.

“I was thinking about what toys to choose to sell, but I don’t think things are running so badly as is.”

“Strictly instruct them not to fight with the passengers, tell them to just get off or go

to another compartment if they seem about to get into one. If they start hurting the passagers, sanctions will be imposed at the Imperial level. Then our business would be over."

"Yes, Your Highness."

This was an unlicensed business. If the vendors started to be shunned and caused the passengers inconveniences, there might be a possibility that the city guards would be dispatched to drive them away, or they might even permanently place guards on the trains.

It would be nice if their income was stable enough to cut ties with the Thieves' Guild. It didn't feel particularly good for my group to potentially get controlled by someone else.

I was about to go back after telling her those things, but Loyar called out to me.

"Your Highness."

"Huh?"

"Don't visit Eleris or Sarkegaar in person."

No, I was actually planning to stop by Eleris' shop though.

"Why?"

"Since you are supposed to come from this place, it's alright to visit, but places like the mansion of Count Pontheus or Eleris' shop might be considered unnatural."

"Ah… Yeah, that's true. But do we have to implement that already?"

"Yeah, there was a tail on you already."

What? No, how did you detect that in the first place?

"I didn't take any actions because they seemed like Your Highness' classmates, but you will have to be careful with your actions in the future."

I never thought that there would be people tracking my actions for some reason.

I was careless.

Dropping by the Rotary Gang was a good thing, because I was supposed to come from this place. However, things would have gotten dangerous if I went anywhere unusual like Eleris' Shop or the mansion of Count Pontheus.

However, I couldn't believe I got followed.

I wasn't some super human, so I couldn't just suddenly stop in some alley and go: "Hey. Come out". That was just impossible.

I didn't have to think much about the reason why they followed me, because I could roughly guess. They probably went after me, because they were curious about how great I really was.

I should refrain from going to the Rotary Gang from now on. Loyar told me that she would send me a message from her side if necessary.

There was the possibility that the Prince might put tails on me, so if I came into contact I seriously had to check my back. I was really very glad that I first stopped by the Rotary Gang. If I decided to go anywhere else first things might have gotten pretty troublesome.

And.

– Here comes the beggar.

I was now facing a less cumbersome situation compared to being caught.

* * *

Upon hearing Loyar's warning I immediately returned to Temple. I also went to talk to the guys I believed might have followed me.

However as soon as I entered the lobby of the Class A dormitory, all the students who stayed behind were staring at me with a look of contempt. Apparently, the rumor had already been swept away. They knew I was a beggar.

And the guys standing on the forefront, Cayer and Erich, were staring at me.

“Hey, why were you hanging out with the beggars under the bridge? Are you a beggar?”

I nodded at Erich’s words.

“Huh. You’re just a bum from the streets?”

When I readily agreed, the expressions of the people looking at me became spectacular.

I guessed they were expecting me to deny having hung out with beggars. However, when I just came out as a beggar, they were dumbfounded.

I stared at Erich and Cayer.

“It seems like you’re trying to tease me for being a beggar and making a fuss about it. But, it’s not like I haven’t heard this crap once or twice before. It’s annoying.”

I sighed with my arms crossed.

“If I were you guys, I would rather not touch me if I knew that I was from the streets.”

As I took one step closer, Cayer as well as Erich stumbled a step back…

“Wha, what? You’re just a beggar…”

“Yo, you dirty bastard rolling around with beggars… Stay away from me……”

It was kind of funny how they were running their mouths while feeling scared shitless.

“What do you think would happen if someone who lived a rough life on the streets suddenly came here and some bastards were staring down at them?”

I took yet another step towards them while they took another step back.

“Huh? Your eyes are spinning suddenly. Yeah, you’re supposed to be scared of this, right?”

As I approached them with gleaming eyes, they tried to retreat. Eventually they

reached the couch and fell on top of it. They looked white as a sheet as if they were intimidated by my words.

“I don’t think you know this because you’re still kids, but you don’t mess with people who have nothing to lose.”

You’re glad that I was just a beggar? I don’t have anything like a powerful background, so you think you can handle me?

Adults, you see, are more afraid of people like that.

People who had nothing to lose wouldn’t think about what they could lose by doing certain things.

“If some crazy guy down on their luck feels threatened, huh. I don’t know. Like this. They’ll hit you. You want to feel that? Huh? If you want me to show you, just say so. Ah, don’t you want to know? You do want to see it, don’t you? So, do you want me to show you or not?”

“Tha, tha…”

“Huh, should I show you or not!?”

I shouted at Cayer.

“N, no… No…”

“Next. You, you bastard. Erich. Should I show you? Tell me.”

“Wha, what… Show me what… What do you want to show me!?”

Erich frantically shouted.

“How about showing your right eye what your left eye looks like, huh? Do you think I won’t be able to harm you even with a knife because you’re stronger than me and you have decent stamina?”

While I explained with a dirty look, Erich shook his head violently, his face blanched, perhaps imagining it.

“I see. If you ever feel like wanting me to show you that, you just have to follow me again.”

When I smiled at them like a psycho, those kids looked like they were about to pee their pants.

Those who were watching this scene weren’t any different.

They seemed to wonder what was wrong with a beggar bastard like me.

In fact, they seemed to have realized that I was an even crazier psycho than they first thought.

“If you’re so full of energy on the weekend, just play some ball. How could kids not know how to play like kids… Tsk.”

I patted the cheeks of those two who had just lost their face.

* * *

It seemed that it was Erich and Cayer who followed me. I also wondered if Heinrich would come at me all excited after he heard that I was just a beggar, but he didn’t.

The fact that I was a beggar would probably spread around rather quickly, but thanks to that scene I just showed them, the rumor that I was just some maniac who didn’t know how precious life was would spread much faster.

I was sure they would become even more reluctant to touch me, although it would probably be better for me if I didn’t directly saw these kids giving me ugly looks. Well, right now I was just keeping them at bay with my crazy gangster bluff, but depending on the results of my training I would become a real hard hitter.

I mean, what else could I do?

Even if I got into a fight and acted tough, what was most important were my abilities after all, so it was important to unlock that damn locked ability.

In the end, I couldn’t think of anything even after the sun went down, so I was kind of worried.

Just when I was thinking about my future.

-Knock, knock.

Someone knocked on my door.

What?

Is it finally time for me to show them something nice? Were they coming to pick another fight with me? Did they forget already?

"……Huh?"

When I opened the door, I saw a totally unexpected person standing there.

It was a pretty girl who was wearing a track suit even though it was the weekend. My apprentice in the studies of Cheonggukjang.

It was Ellen Artorius.

"Go to the gym."

Not "Would you like to come to the gym" but "Go"? What was she talking about? Who told her to bring me to the gym?

"Who wants me to come?"

"I don't know. I think she's a senior."

Senior?

What nonsense was that?

"The others went, too."

What was the meaning of this?

* * *

Somebody had to go call me, but no one wanted to do it, so it seemed like Ellen went.

But why the hell did a senior call us?

The gym was in the form of a very large hall. All the Year 1 Class A students present in the dormitory were gathered here, except those that were away over the weekend.

Everyone was there except Bertus and Liana de Grantz, who had a mansion in the Capital.

So there were 9 people in total…

Why were they doing that?

“Is he the last one?”

Ellen nodded her head. I could see my classmates in prone position and a little kid trying to keep as grim of an expression on her face as possible.

That little brat spoke.

“What are you doing? Lie down.”

“……”

“Won’t you get down already?”

She wasn’t wearing a uniform, but she was indeed a kid. I mean, I was a child as well, but she was more of a child than I was.

Wasn’t she just a middle schooler?

But that brat was supposed to be our senior?

Ellen lay face down next to the other children. The little one then looked at the lying children and started to talk.

“Guys. I think your friend has rather bad ears.”

The children were staring at me and seemed to cuss me out very hardly with their eyes. They were telling me to quickly lie down. No, but why were these prideful bastards doing this just because of one little brat?

“Don’t you understand words?!”

The little brat screamed.

“What kind of senior are you?”

“Wha, what…?”

As soon as I said that, the little brat’s expression turned into bewilderment.

“You’re telling me you‘re a senior? Someone as tiny as you? What’s so crazy about this little thing that everyone is lying on their bellies?”

The faces of my classmates who were lying down turned bizarre.

“Yo, yo… You don’t know who I am…?”

“I don’t, get out of here before I flick you. So annoying.”

“Eeek!”

When I raised my hand suddenly, the little brat stepped back in confusion. Her face turned blue.

How could this girl be like that? That look.

She seemed confused.

“Y, you… You are done here.”

“Yes, thank you.”

The blue faced little brat gnashed her teeth at me and strode out of the gym. Everyone was looking at me blankly, doubting their own eyes at this crazy thing I did again.

Although, this time, my mad act seemed more welcome than before.

“Why aren’t you getting up?”

Everyone slowly began to get up with puzzled expressions on their faces. I looked towards Cayer, not the others.

“What’s going on here?”

He was a pushover after all.

“Ah… No, this.”

Cayer hesitated to explain as it might hurt his pride.

“Ah, hey!”

When I came towards him with a harsh look in my eyes, he hesitated first but then opened his mouth.

CHAPTER 39

“What a sight.”

When I heard the explanation from Cayer, I was dumbfounded and burst into laughter.

What transpired just now was a tradition passed down from generation to generation in Class A.

They called this ‘Draining’. They did this to prevent the nobles and royalty, who were said to be narrow-minded, from acting up. It seemed that this absurdity came into being as a means to show everyone that they were equal.

As a result the 2nd graders would come and knock down the 1st graders. They would also tell them at the same time that they should never lose to Class B and that they would kill them if they ever lost to them. They were trying to do that today, the first weekend after the start of the school year.

That’s why they were making people lie down regardless of their status, telling them that there were only the seniors who were superior to them regardless of their status. So it was rather ridiculous for me to act like that towards her, so that brat was dumbfounded.

I had no idea something so absurd was a tradition in Class A. This was mainly due to my focus on the Class B dormitory. That unwillingness to lose to Class B of Class A was also coerced by their seniors. Something like that?

The students of Class B would have fun, eating good food with some nice seniors…

Students from Class A sure had a lot of personality, regardless of grade, huh?

Well, I was sure to be the one who had the biggest personality of them all though…

“So a commoner upperclassmen would come here to teach the freshmen of Class A like this every year?”

“That’s what I heard…”

“Who was that brat just now?”

“She’s a sophomore and her name is… Her name is…”

“Redina, she didn’t tell us her talent.”

Kono Lint who was next to him told me in his stead. So originally, this was an important event of a commoner completely crushing the sense of authority of the royalty and nobility. This year, that little brat was the one in charge.

Anyway, they probably felt it was ridiculous for everyone to be treated like that, but as it was a tradition they were clenching their teeth. Even if it hurt their pride a little, it would hurt a lot more having to leave Royal Class.

They must have thought that all the other nobles and royals of the Royal Class had received that treatment.

Anyway, the royals and nobles swallowed their pride and were quietly undergoing the process of de-authorization, to find out what it’s like to be a beggar.

“……”

Everyone was focusing their attention on me for some reason. Everyone was just staying in the gym wondering if it would be alright to leave like this.

“Hey.”

No. 4, Harriet de Saint-Owan, called out to me worriedly. That Harriet with the Magic talent.

“What?”

“Will you take responsibility if this goes wrong?”

It was like she was asking me why I didn’t just leave that pride that had already been bent, bent. She had a pretty face, but was ferocious, and a total jerk.

“And what would happen if it went wrong?”

“We’d look bad to our seniors.”

I thought she was talking about what image the seniors had of us.

“And what would happen if they see us in a bad light? What then?”

“Huh?”

“What will happen if the seniors see us in a bad light?”

“Tha, that’s it…”

“Won’t you be able to go to class or won’t you be able to sleep? If they beat us up, we should report it to the teachers. Why did you flop on your belly if that’s all there is to it? Do you guys have no guts? How could you have even less pride than me who came from the streets? Tsk.”

Sigh. When I looked at everyone disdainfully and tsked, everyone, except Ellen and Cliff, had red hot faces.

They probably thought that if they didn’t listen they would get into trouble, so they clenched their teeth, thinking about the honor and social recognition they would receive after graduating from the Royal Class.

They felt like shit, but they tried to bear with it, but that’s when I waltzed in and flipped the table.

“Anyway, it’s your responsibility! We did what we were told! There’s nothing wrong with that! Okay?”

Harriet yelled at me, thinking that she just had lost all her pride and face.

“I’ll kill you if this will mess up my life at Temple.”

It seemed that Harriet thought that I would be no harm to her because I kept still and didn’t touch her before.

What a joke.

“Kill me? Were you just saying whatever came to your mind? Do you think I can’t

beat you?"

"Wha, what?"

"Where could status and rank, as well as the difference between man and woman be found in the Royal Class, which views everyone equal before talent? If you act big, you're gonna have my handprint imprinted on you cheek for the next few weeks. You hear?"

I'm quite experienced when it came to death. I had already died once after all.

None of you have died before, right? Well, I have!

As I took a step closer, Harriet slipped back in surprise.

"The only thing you got going for you his a hard head. So how are you gonna kill me?"

"He, he… H, Head?"

"Yeah."

When I treated the Princess of the Saint-Owan Grand-Duchy as someone whose only strength was her hard head, everyone's expressions became strange.

"Hu, huh… Huh! Huh!"

Harriet felt more insulted and humiliated then when she had to lie on her stomach, so her face turned apple red and she couldn't bring out a single coherent word.

-Bang!

"Come forward, you bastard!"

And.

This time a group of people stormed into the gym.

* * *

There were a total of five people who stormed in. They were probably in their

second year of high school, so they were 18 years old. Of course the kid from earlier was among them as well.

“Is it him?”

“Yes!”

The little brat called Redina hid behind a male classmate and pointed at me. What, you were just some cute little brat with your classmates, huh? This looked like a little sister calling her big brother after a fight. That guy looked like he was about to shout “How dare you mess with our child with that attitude of yours?”.

The senior who seemed to be the leader of the group, was looking at me with a twisted expression. Wow, it was so bizarre to see a high school student do this in real life.

“Hey, junior. What’s your name?”

“Reinhardt.”

“Huh. You’re probably from some great noble family and don’t know how the Royal Class operates…”

“I’m not a noble though?”

It seemed like I was mistaken for some kind of aristocrat, and despite the circumstances, laughter erupted among my first-year classmates.

“Why are you laughing? What’s so funny?”

The atmosphere behind me became chilly again due to this senior’s criticism.

“So what? Are you a royal?”

“Nope?”

“……What?”

Then the boy’s expression turned strange. I was neither a noble nor a royal. So there was only one conclusion.

“What are you saying? The only one from the Imperial Family here is supposed to be Bertus? You’re Reinhardt, right?”

“Who’s from the Imperial Family?”

I laughed and then said:

“I’m not a noble, nor am I a royal, nor a part of the Imperial family, but just a beggar from the streets, what about it?”

Everyone was stunned by my bold declaration.

“…A beggar? You are a beggar?”

“Yeah, a beggar.”

Everyone seemed shocked at how casually I was saying that. The one that seemed like their representative looked at me with his arms crossed, completely speechless.

“No, then why are you acting so high and mighty like the nobles and royals do?”

“If you don’t want to do something, you don’t. What’s the big deal? Can’t a beggar have pride?”

“Oh, is that so?”

He clenched his fist and began to approach me.

“Then I’ll just have to beat it out of you. Let me give you a good beating.”

-Pow!

I felt it as soon as I got hit.

That guy was the real deal.

* * *

The atmosphere was even chillier than before.

“Urg…”

It hurt like hell. That was all I could think off. His fist hit really hard, no joke.

“And haven’t you been really silent since earlier?”

When I stepped back holding onto my stomach, he started approaching me slowly.

I’ve been acting like I was mad up until now, and I thought I would be able to get this guy like that.

However, this was unexpected. This guy was a senior after all, not one of my classmates. It seemed clear that our physical abilities couldn’t even be compared with. That was the difference a year could make.

“If you are part of Royal Class.”

-Pow!

“Urg!”

“Follow the Royal Class’ traditions.”

-Pow!

“Ugh!”

“If it were up to me, you would be long dead. Got that?”

I was getting helplessly beat up by an 18 year old kid while he was casually talking. I couldn’t stand getting beat up like that, so I ran towards him.

“Heh.”

-Pow!

“Urrg!”

“Did you just try to hit a senior, huh?”

Although he was startled by the fact that I tried to punch him, that guy avoided my fist just by moving his head a bit. He then laughed and grabbed my hair.

“This bastard is for real.”

-Pow!

He beat my chest.

“Really.”

-Pow!

“Urgh!”

He hit me in the abdomen.

“Do you want to die?”

-Pow!

“Heup!”

I got hit in my face. My classmates and seniors were watching me get beat up blankly.

What was surprising, was…

The look on their faces wasn’t a refreshed one. They were obviously looking scared.

I realized it as I got hit in the head.

Even though I couldn’t fight.

I felt like I had won.

“You’re just a little bit-…”

“Hey.”

-Kak!

“Urgh!”

“Got you now, you fucking bitch.”

“Kuaaaaarg!”

I grabbed that man’s crotch with all my strength. It slapped me right in the face, so I just grabbed it like a crown of victory.

Well.

It was average for a high schooler.

“Say “Spare me”. Go for it.”

“Arggghhgghgh! Hey. Hey. Let go. Let go, while I’m still being niiiiaargh! Please!””

That guy was now being tested on the limits of his vocal cords and his balls.

The other seniors who witnessed that astonishing scene now approached to stop me.

“I won’t stop!”

“Ah, no! You, you crazy bastard!”

“Don’t come any closer, you bastards!”

“Yaaaarggghghghg! Urrrgggggghhhhaaaah!”

“It’s twisting. Huh? Ain’t it twisting nicely? Huh? If you come any closer, I’ll twist it all the way around! Oh, looks like he’ll have to live as a seedless watermelon for all his life then. Ah. Dunno how long it will take, but if you come any closer, then this guy can say his descendants goodbye! Huh!”

Hearing my threats everyone was unable to rush to his aid, as I put even more strength into my grasp.

“Le! Le! Let goooOOoOOOOoooh!”

“Say, please spare me.”

The male students all cringed unconsciously at that scene of horror.

“S, sp, Spare! Spare me!”

“You have to add the please. Mind your language! Please! Do it!”

– Clennnch!

“Please spaaaaaheaaaare meeeiiiiik! Eerk!”

Boy, you’re starting to sound like a girl.

“Letting go now? Not a chance.”

-Clennnch!

“Uwaaaarrrrrrrrkkkkkkk! Krrrrk! Aeeeek!”

He just let out some really weird voice.

I was getting goosebumps now too.

“Take your friends and get out.”

I muttered grimly.

“You can come beat me up whenever, but if you do it, I’ll really break your stuff here until it can’t be fixed, so be prepared. Oh, and next time I’ll really twist it all the way around.”

I let go of him and then looked down at the man now collapsed on the ground.

– Kick!

“Urgh!”

“Take this thing away, you bastards.”

As the finishing touch, I peppered a kick into his face.

* * *

Two of the seniors rushed to take him and then disappeared, perhaps because getting that bubble blowing bastard treated was more urgent.

“You crazy psycho pervert!”

“Keep the praise coming.”

That little girl named Redina followed behind that kid who got taken away while crying. She seemed incredibly shocked. However, there was still one senior left in the gym. Although she looked like she had just seen something absurd and terrible, she was a relatively calm-looking woman.

“Aren’t you going?”

“Junior, don’t make the situation worse.”

“Then do you want to beat me up? Will you twist my thing off?”

“Junior, I just want to have a good conversation. Since there is no one else here, why don’t you show me the least bit of respect?”

I felt a certain sense of crisis from that invitation in this kind of situation.

I don’t know what it was about her, but she seemed strange. She looked like an adult, and I guess she just told me to stop this.

I’d talk nice to the people who talked nice to me, and the others seemed to have given up on thinking about this development.

“Yes, well. Sure. So what’s the matter?”

“I’m Adriana, a sophomore at Royal Class, A-2. You said you were Reinhardt, right?”

“Ah, yes.”

She gave me her name. Did she really only want to have a good conversation with

me?

“We don’t want to do this either. It’s been done for generations, so the upperclassmen put pressure on us, too. To do it quickly.”

It was the classic hereditary system. How absurd.

They forced them to do it, even if they didn’t want to do it.

“Redina is a weak-hearted girl. She wouldn’t be able to harm anyone, she would rather hurt herself than having to talk harshly to you guys. Her seniors nominated her and forced her to do it.”

“You could just not do it. Why do it, if you’ll only get hurt in the process?”

“Because it’s been done like this for so long. I know it sounds weird. But if one would want to just stop a tradition that had been going on for such a long time for no good reason, things would become troublesome.”

Adriana certainly didn’t seem like she enjoyed doing this. However, with pressure coming from the higher grades, it was eventually decided for the small Redina to do it and she wasn’t even that type of person.

“If we say that we didn’t do it, maybe the third graders will come. At that time… Will you be able to manage?”

She asked me if I would kick out the third graders by doing some unspeakable, shameful thing again like just now.

“The higher the grade, the harder it is for them to hold back. You. You might actually get hurt.”

Yeah, the more time one spent at Temple, the stronger one would get. I was beaten like a dog by a second grader, but I took advantage of his carelessness and got hold of his weak spot. There wouldn’t be such a chance if the older students started coming.

“Do the teachers just watch this stuff?”

“They acquiesce to it”

It would actually be quite comfortable for the teachers, if the troublesome guys got straightened out like this. They could use the seniors to rail in the ones that danced out of line and rehabilitate them.

“Let’s just do things in moderation, Junior. If things get blown even bigger, we’d get scolded by our seniors, but you would be in even greater trouble.”

In conclusion, “Can’t you just bow down like it usually goes?”. She certainly seemed like a communicative person as she was even trying to gently advice me. Still, she didn’t seem to want to take on the hassle to break this circle of absurdity.

Don’t make a fuss and be nice.

Can’t you just endure it for a bit and pretend that you’ve been convinced?

That’s what she had been suggesting and requesting.

Well, that was possible. I could see that she really was a communicative person.

“Tell the third years to come. Weren’t they the ones who made you seniors do this? If those bastards want it to be done, they should do it themselves.”

“……What?”

Adriana expressed her astonishment as she didn’t expect me to go down that route.

Second years, third years!

Just come at me!

“Instead, they shouldn’t come today or tomorrow.”

I chuckled.

“Tell them to come on Monday. Monday night, to be exact.”

I knew why they chose the weekend. Adriana bit her lips as she immediately understood what I was saying.

“Let’s see whether those third years can tell Imperial Prince Bertus de Gardias to

bend down. Wouldn't it be better to have all of us present? I really can't quite understand why you have to do it at this time. We should do it together. I promise that I'll accept this stuff when they come over on Monday."

I could see why they would do this on the weekend.

They must have confirmed that the Prince returned to the Imperial Court over the weekend.

No matter how much he was part of the Royal Class, they didn't want to touch the Prince. They could do these things to other nobles or royals, but I didn't think they would dare to actually touch the Prince.

"If those third years won't come on Monday, I believe something like this would never happen again."

"……"

Everyone was astonished that I dared to mention the Prince. Adriana just sighed briefly with her eyes closed.

"You're really one great kid."

The senior with the calm demeanor left the gym with these words.

She didn't think I was crazy enough to mention the Prince.

I turned around and talked to Harriet de Saint-Owan.

"I took responsibility, alright, you idiot."

"……Hey, don't call me an idiot! I, I'm smarter than you!"

"Yeah, a high quality idiot."

"Thi, this! This!"

She shouted with her face red, but she seemed relieved that this situation had been resolved somehow.

The looks they gave me seemed a bit different from before as they slowly dispersed one by one.

They felt like they just found a bizarre use for this psycho, a beast that should be avoided.

CHAPTER 40

At first, I obviously didn't want to stand out much, but that had become a thing of the past. I've already caused too many incidents, to just get rid of this attention.

Yeah, well, it would work out somehow. It was true that the looks my classmates gave me changed after I fought with the seniors. Of course, it wasn't even close to goodwill.

I mean, the fact that I was still a wild animal in their eyes didn't change. I just told those guys that they should come back when the Prince is around after all.

I somehow got into the position of a madman who was a bit better than they expected, I guess?

"…You sold my name?"

"Yeah."

I told Bertus, who returned to the dormitory on Sunday, the truth. I thought it would be better if I told him with my own mouth rather than him, finding out in a different way later. I talked to Bertus on the terrace from last time. There were few people around so it was easy to have a good talk.

Bertus seemed speechless when he heard that I sold his name and forced our seniors to step down.

"I knew there was such a tradition in the Royal Class, but when I was wondering why they didn't come, they just looked at me…"

Bertus didn't have to pretend to be friendly or talk nicely in front of me.

Bertus knew that there were such traditions, but he seemed to have been more curious as to why they hadn't come.

"So, what if the seniors come on Monday? Knowing what you told me just now, wouldn't it be you who made me lie down rather than the seniors?"

Bertus smiled insidiously, asking me with his eyes if I wanted to die.

“There’s a very high probability that they won’t come, but even if they do, it would be quite the funny sight.”

“Funny?”

“I mean, whether you do it or not, wouldn’t they become quite restless?”

It would be funny if he did end up doing it, but even funnier if he didn’t. They’d think things like: “Do we beat up the Prince now?”. And even if he did lay down on his stomach, the guy who ordered would probably die from a heart attack. No matter how simple the system of Temple was, with the only type of status being senior and junior, the Imperial Prince and Princess were the second most noble aristocrats of this world as the Imperial authority was piercing the skies now.

Reality was very different from rules.

The son of a great noble could be worked with, but the Imperial Prince was just too high up in class.

Bertus was smiling at the bastard who dared to sell his name.

“Fine, but still, selling the name of the Imperial Prince is a serious crime. You didn’t refer to your classmate Bertus, but to Prince Bertus de Gardias. You obviously didn’t refer to me as a friend, now did you?”

“I suppose that is what I did?”

He was right though, as I didn’t refer to him as my friend Bertus, but as the Prince. Was this guy mad?

Should I use the ring to run away?

“Usually, it would make sense to kill your whole family for that sin. But I don’t want to do that. You’ve used me once, so wouldn’t it be fair if I got to use you once as well?”

“Hm?”

Would there even be anything I could do for him? In any case, Bertus did offer me a rather fair deal. Speaking the Prince's name was certainly possible within the walls of Temple, but it would be a rather shocking thing to do on the outside.

"I know you take some classes with my half-sister."

He probably meant Charlotte.

"It's nothing much I'm asking of you. Just let me know if you notice anything unusual."

I should keep an eye on Charlotte and report to him if I see anything unusual. He didn't want me to be friends with him or do anything behind the scenes.

But in the end, wasn't I gradually becoming Bertus' pawn?

It felt rather annoying.

"Sure thing."

"Alright."

There was nothing special about it. We didn't talk much in the first place. In my current state I didn't have any leverage at all.

He didn't seem to care much about me. Did he even know who I really was?

"And, uhm, get along with the other kids."

Bertus sighed, pretending to be angry.

"By my standard, I'm trying to get along quite well here though? What. Didn't I save the kids from being harassed today, in a way?"

At my absurd remark, Bertus burst out laughing.

"I don't think it's considered nice to call Princess Saint-Owan an idiot though?"

Did she whine to you about that?

* * *

It wasn't really a secret that Bertus and I were speaking to each other. As a result, the way my classmates looked at me became quite strange.

I didn't think we'd ever get along, but we did talk to each other for a bit, and from a distance, it would seem that we were quite friendly with each other.

I revealed myself to be a beggar, but Bertus didn't seem to be particularly mad with me, who actually dared to sell his name.

My classmates didn't seem to quite understand this.

"Be, Bertus!"

Erich seemed to have contemplated for a while and then ran to Bertus from across the terrace.

"Yes, do you have something to say to me?"

"B, be careful of that guy…"

"Aah, Reinhardt? Don't worry. He's just a bit clumsy."

"Still…"

Well, no matter how one looked at it, even I would think that I wasn't like that just because I was a little clumsy.

It looked like he had that nonsensical thought that I might end up harming the Prince because I was just some lowly bastard. I couldn't hear them that well as they were getting further away from me.

Come to think of it, I was definitely more useful than Erich.

At the moment, at least.

That image that the Prince seemed to be closer to me than the other kids was spreading around, mystifying the other kids.

About my job?

I also didn't know what I was going to do about it.

Bertus definitely was the type of person that would treat me well if I had proven myself to be useful.

Even if I decided to leave after I made my profit later, it would be better to cooperate with Bertus for now. Unless he asked me to do something bad to Charlotte.

As I was leaving the lobby and heading towards the dormitory, I saw Harriet sitting at a table, drinking tea and reading a book.

When she made eye contact with me she frowned.

"Hmpf!"

She turned her head sharply with a "Hmpf!" as soon as she saw me. What's with that? She did it so obviously. Wasn't this rather cute?

What the hell was she supposed to be? A noble high school girl?

Hmpf! She said. When was that fashionable again?

"Idiot."

"Wha, what?!"

Her face turned red again, while I just shrugged.

"I was just saying a random word. What? Is your name Idiot?"

"U,uh… Uuung…"

What's this? Had she already gotten used to getting called "Idiot"? Would she turn her head now every time someone said "Idiot"?

"You said, you were smart, right? This isn't good, you know?"

"This!"

She sprang up and strode towards me.

“You just keep provoking me, so that I’ll bring up my identity and when I do you’d just run to the teacher to tell on me so that I get punished! Huh!”

It seemed like she had a pretty vivid imagination. She seemed to think that I would go around provoking people so that they’d say something like: “How dare you, I’m the son of XXX”, ultimately violating the school rules.

Well, she might think that I’d do that, because I was supposed to be a nut job.

“No, I haven’t really thought of doing that…”

“Then why are you doing this to me?! I’m not an idiot! I’m not right? So why are you doing this, you bastard?!”

“No, well. The payout is just too great. All kinds of reactions come out with every single word I say. Wouldn’t you do this as well?”

“What? Pay… Pay, what?”

With every single word I told her all kinds of dramatic reactions came out, so I really just did this because it was fun. I walked past her who was looking to say something with a flushed red head.

“Cute.”

“Wha, what? What did you say…?”

“You’re cute, you’re a genius but also silly and childish. It’s to my taste. I like that you’re so childish. That’s it.”

“What… What do you mean?”

She seemed confused whether I complimented or insulted her.

It was so much fun teasing a beautiful noble young lady.

‘Huh, how am I supposed to react to this? Is this for real? This can’t be happening’

The look on her face as she was trying to make sense of the situation, but just couldn't come to terms with it was really funny.

I giggled to myself as I went back to the dorm.

* * *

Monday's common classes. There were a lot of things going on, on Monday.

First.

"Reinhardt."

The second-year senior whom I caused a lot of trouble for came to the classroom. He didn't come alone. He arrived with the other seniors he was with last time. Four people, with the exception of Adriana, the calm senior, appeared.

That little brat from last time stared at me as if she was going to eat me. It was also true that the atmosphere in the classroom suddenly froze over with the appearance of the seniors.

He suddenly threw something at me before I could say anything.

-Flop

It fell on my desk, not my face or anywhere else.

A glove.

I knew what this was.

"You have seriously defamed me, Art de Gartis, the heir to the Gartis family."

He didn't look as excited as he did before.

"Therefore, I challenge you to a duel to restore my damaged honor."

"……A duel?"

"Yes, a duel."

What kind of horse shit was this?

“Choose a time and place. There, observers will overlook our duel.”

Everyone reacted with disbelief when he applied for a duel against his own junior.

“So, let me get this straight. You’re applying for a duel, because your junior, whom you tried to beat up, grabbed you down there making you scream, leading to you feeling embarrassed?”

At those words, everyone who witnessed this scene tried to hold back their laughter. The seniors looked around and told everyone not to laugh, but I could see the corners of their mouths’ trembling.

It was funny, regardless on which side one stood.

“That was foul! Bad! Pervert!”

Little Redina only pointed at me and shouted.

“You look like a mess. You have to use everything you can, you know? Should I’ve just quietly gotten beat up? Is that it? If I can break your head, I’ll break your head and if I can grab onto something, I sure as hell will grab it. Is that wrong? Should the weak only get beat up? Huh?”

“How longwinded. If you intend to refuse the duel and embrace that dishonor, then do it. That would mean that you’re a just a man of such caliber. That’s all. Admit that you would only be able to win a fight through dirty methods.”

Art de Gartis seemed unmoved by my words. I knew, because he beat me up the other day. If I fought that guy, I’d definitely get crushed. No, not only crushed, I would probably get seriously injured.

A duel.

I did include some duel scenes. Duels within the Temple can take place on the premise that the students do not use real swords.

One might get hurt badly.

However, one won't die.

"Yes, I accept."

Maybe because they didn't expect me to accept it, not only the person who applied for the duel, but also the other seniors and my classmates seemed to be astonished.

"Keep in mind, I won't fall for the same dirty trick as last time."

I required extreme psychological pressure.

That was the reason why I accepted it even though I knew it would be too much for me.

I didn't know if that duel would do it for me, but I had to try.

CHAPTER 41

It was only natural that the atmosphere in the classroom became strange after the seniors left.

“Hey, you. Could I talk to you for a second?”

“What is there to talk about?”

Even though everyone went back, the little senior, Redina, stayed behind and called out to me.

She wasn’t aggressive in the least when she asked to talk with me. She actually looked very scared even though she had been sending me death glares to up until now.

She took me out and dragged me to the stair landing so that no one could hear us.

“What is it?”

“Are you crazy?”

“What do you mean, crazy?”

“Art is Second Aear Class A’s Number 3. Don’t you know what that means? Do you want to die?”

They naturally thought I’d just embrace the disgrace and refuse the duel. I only won by taking advantage of his weak spot last time, so that guy knew I wasn’t good at fighting.

“He won’t kill me.”

“You said you don’t have any skill or talent. So what makes you so confident? Are you an idiot?”

Adriana told me yesterday that this little brat was actually forced to do this and that

she was a really weak-hearted girl.

She actually looked pretty fidgety now. She was excited at the thought of throwing insults at me if I were to refuse the duel, but when I chose the other option, which was crazy, she was rather frightened.

“Duels aren’t a joke. There were kids who got really badly injured in them. Go to Art quickly, apologize and beg him for forgiveness. Things are just getting too weird, you idiot! Art would have let you go if you sincerely apologized!”

She also told me how embarrassed he was.

Knowing that I wasn’t good at fighting, he applied for a duel and tried to get an apology out of me if I didn’t agree to it.

After Adriana told me that she was a good kid yesterday, I was wondering what kind of person she actually was, but she really seemed like a nice girl.

“What is life?”

I shrugged.

“If I get beaten to death, than that’s what’s gonna happen, I guess.”

Redina seemed totally dumbfounded by my nonchalant response.

The duel was decided to take place two weeks later in the First Year Class A’s dormitory.

During that week, what kind of miraculous talent could I get that would help me win against a second year student of the Royal Class in a duel?

I just hope that this was psychologically pressuring enough.

I really hoped that I didn’t have to prepare a situation similar to when I was escaping from the Demon King’s Castle and almost died. I hoped with all my heart that this would be enough.

It was true that I was scared because I was sure to get beaten up badly, but I couldn’t keep doing this with my ability locked.

[Event Quest: Duel with Art de Gartis]

[Description : Art asked for a duel for defaming him. The probability of you winning is very low.]

[Goal : Go through with the duel.]

[Completion Reward : 600 Points]

[Consolation Reward : 200 Points]

An event quest appeared as if it was natural.

And in this case, even losing would pay off.

I would be rewarded just for having the duel. The probability of me winning this duel was so low, there probably was a way to avoid it. So even if I wouldn't be able to make my talent awaken through this psychologically pressuring situation, I would get rewarded.

Why was it giving me pity prizes now?

Even though I did this to myself, I still felt a bit depressed.

* * *

Duels were allowed within Temple, but a teacher must watch over them. Otherwise, they might actually kill someone in that duel.

"……"

Mr. Epinhauser was staring at me silently. Since Mr. Epinhauser had previously stated that he would be the observer if a duel were to ever occur, so I reported this matter to him.

"If the duel has been agreed upon by both parties there is no problem. Write down the location, date and time."

The teacher didn't ask me if I was crazy. He was a good and interesting guy in that he worried rarely or wouldn't meddle unnecessarily.

A-11 Reinhardt would duel with a sophomore.

Naturally, that rumor was coursing through Class A and then spread to Class B. To be precise it was during the P.E. lesson which was joint.

“Reinhardt? What the hell happened? A duel? With a second grader?”

Ludwig asked me after the short break between running exercises and strength training.

I guess he became worried because he heard about this all of a sudden.

“This and that happened. I’m too lazy to explain all that.”

“Wouldn’t it be better if we could end this all with an apology? Won’t you get seriously hurt?”

Ludwig was stubborn and insisted on what If I were to get hurt, and how it would be better if I just ended this all with an apology. Although the classes were divided into A and B, maybe because we were still in the same grade, the Class B kids were also looking at me worriedly.

And the kids who seemed to have heard the details were shocked.

But for some reason, Charlotte was just staring at me. Her gaze somehow felt different from the other children.

I was definitely not mistaken about that.

Shortly after PE, Charlotte called out to me from behind as I was exhaustedly walking towards the changing room.

“You said you were Reinhardt, right?”

“……Yeah, so.”

Charlotte walked over to me slowly and put something into my hand.

“Check it.”

After leaving those cold commanding words behind, Charlotte walked her way towards her classroom.

[Stay in the classroom after class]

There was only one sentence written on the slip of paper.

What?

I was told by Bertus to keep an eye on Charlotte, but it seemed like Charlotte also had some business with me.

* * *

The common classes ended with the P.E. class. Mr. Epinhauser gave a closing speech, and then the students all exited the classroom.

After our life-threatening escape and coming to Temple, Charlotte and I had never spoken with each other.

Did she notice who I was? If that was the case, I had to immediately leave Temple.

No. If she actually did, how did she know? After all the students left, I was the only one left in the classroom.

-Katchak

Then, the door opened and Charlotte entered Class A's classroom. This personality and the personality she showed me in that critical situation were bound to be different. Her being completely aware that her life was in danger, and Charlotte crying while hugging the body of her presumed mother in that dark prison cell.

This Charlotte de Gardias, who gave off a cold impression, was like a completely different person. Was this Charlotte's original personality?

"What's the matter?"

Charlotte approached me while looking at me, then she sat obliquely in front of the desk next to me.

“I usually don’t want to converse with people like you.”

“……What?”

What was she doing all of a sudden?

“I heard you were all over the place? You like to stand out, you have a bad temper and even got asked to duel by a senior today…”

Charlotte had a very bad impression of me, probably because she heard the rumors about me. There certainly wasn’t anything good about my actions, so it couldn’t be helped if Charlotte viewed me in a negative light.

Still, I felt a bit heart broken.

“Is it because you are from a humble background that you treat people more strongly, so you won’t be ignored?”

Charlotte’s blunt words somewhat hit the nail on the head. I didn’t want to seem like a pushover so I acted like a dog. As she continued to talk, it didn’t seem that she noticed who I was.

So what is that she wanted?

“I heard you’re a beggar. I did some research.”

Research?

If I’m a beggar, then I’m just a beggar. Why did she do research? It must have been on Saturday that this rumor reached her ears, but she had been researching me?

“I know who you are.”

She did?

“Where you’re from, what kind of members your gang has, and what kind of organization stands behind them.”

I had goosebumps all over my body.

Charlotte didn't seem like she knew I was a demon, but she found out about something else.

She knew about the Rotary Gang and that it was supported by the Thieves' Guild.

"Keep in mind that it is uncommon for me to deal with pests like you."

She was saying that she didn't only dislike me because of the kind of person I was.

She didn't like me because she thought I was associated with a criminal organisation.

Although Bertus' power was enormous, it seemed clear that Charlotte, who returned to the Emperor's side, could also wield formidable forces. How else could she find out all these facts in that short amount of time?

She found out about the Rotary Gang just by finding out where I came from. and even gathered clues about the Thieves' Guild who supported them.

They were tightly entangled after all.

"Wa, wait… I… I don't know what you're talking about… I don't know… What is this about?"

"Do you really think I'm naive enough to believe that excuse that they sent you here simply to get educated at Temple?"

Charlotte leaned against the desk in exasperation, then came up to me and looked down at me with sad eyes.

She started looking at me deeply.

"Stop acting like that. If you keep pretending you don't know, I'm going to mobilize the city guards right this instant to clean up those dirty sewers."

There was no point in denying my link to them.

Like Bertus, Charlotte wasn't someone I could control. This was even more serious than that time with Bertus though. Bertus didn't seem to have made a background check on me, but Charlotte could even connect me and Loyar at this moment.

Normally, she wouldn't have dealt with someone like me.

But right now it wasn't a normal situation.

In the end, Charlotte said that she had some business with me. Denial would only put the Rotary Gang at risk.

"What do you want?"

Admitting it in the end, I waited for her answer. Charlotte took something out of her arms.

A portrait was on the paper Charlotte gave me.

"This kid."

"!"

Of course, I knew who that was.

It was me, who tried to use camouflage magic to hide my horns.

"Find this kid. If he's alive, tell me where he is. If he died, tell me where and why he died. And also who killed him."

"……"

"You must find him."

She stared at me coldly as if she would destroy everything before her if I couldn't find him.

"Wait, what should I do if I can't… Are you asking me to find a kid whose name even you don't know? Rather, isn't your side more……"

Charlotte frowned when I said something like "What can I even do? I just belong to a Beggars' Organization." and "There must be a lot of other people available".

"You don't need to know that. It's important that you have to find his whereabouts faster than Bertus."

I killed the Knights of Duke Salerian. I didn't know what happened to Dyrus, but it was clear that both me and Dyrus were targeted by Duke Salerian…

Just as Charlotte was looking for me, Bertus was as well.

Charlotte seemed to be looking for me with all the manpower she could mobilize. That was why she was trying to even mobilize this kind of organisation, she usually wouldn't even spare a single look.

"I… Could end up handing him over to Bertus though?"

"Perhaps."

To begin with, I was in Class A which meant a lot closer to Bertus. However, Charlotte's eyes then lit up in cold anger.

"However, if that were to happen, I will surely kill you with my own hands as well as that organization of yours."

Damn it.

I never thought Charlotte would be looking for me so desperately, because the man she wanted me to find was right in front of her. I just wanted her to forget about me, but it seemed like she couldn't.

She thought that I'd get killed if Bertus found me first.

"Hey, that kid… Why is he so important?"

"You don't need to know. You have someone to find, so that's all you have to do."

Charlotte didn't seem to want to provide an explanation for me. She just pressed the portrait against my chest.

"Report to me regularly about the status of the investigation. It's not like your grades in Temple are your top priority. Right?"

My life and the lives of the gang members relied on this.

CHAPTER 42

A boy who saved her but then suddenly disappeared.

Charlotte seemed to think that he became a beggar. That was why she asked me who also was a beggar to find the boy, because a beggar would know a beggar best.

A student from a beggar organization that entered Temple. To Charlotte, I seemed to be the best option to look for that boy for her.

But while Charlotte seemed rational, she wasn't. The emotions that flashed in her eyes when she told me to find him showed that Charlotte wasn't calm at all.

She looked like she was about to lose her reason. Charlotte, who threatened me and insisted on me finding myself somehow, seemed unable to control her emotions.

Charlotte carried out a meticulous background check on me in mere days, however she seemed unable to think rationally.

I thought she'd obviously think I was suspicious while listening to Dyrus recount, but she didn't seem like that at all right at that moment. She only felt desperate to find someone who was very dear to her.

In some cases, there were people who never doubted anyone.

Charlotte didn't seem to think that I was suspicious at all. Maybe she thought that I simply ran away or was kidnapped and killed.

That was what I believed went through her mind.

If she had even the slightest inkling that I was a demon in disguise, Charlotte should have doubted me.

If she checked my origin as a beggar, the date my ID was issued, and interrogated the beggars personally, Charlotte would have noticed that I just appeared out of nowhere one day.

However, Charlotte was so obsessed with finding Valier, that she just wanted to use me as a tool to find him for her, but didn't go around asking about me herself.

I felt a little good, but on the other hand I didn't. I was now in a position where I had to deceive this kid who was looking for me so desperately.

I had been given this bizarre order of finding and bringing myself to Charlotte. Appearing in front of her with the appearance of Valier would solve everything, but she wouldn't let me go. She'd somehow try to keep me by her side.

What should I do?

One of my assistants, Sarkegaar, was the one who kidnapped the Imperial Princess. It would be absurd to reveal my true identity to her and standing in front of her in the form of Valier would be very dangerous.

This was never a matter I could simply decide on my own.

I had to discuss this matter with Loyar, Eleris and Sarkegaar.

Anyway, I was now completely trapped between Bertus and Charlotte.

Depending on my actions, it would be decided if the decision to come to Temple was the worst possible one we could have made.

* * *

The one closest to my body was Bertus, and the one closest to my heart was Charlotte.

To be honest, I felt very sorry. I wasn't in a situation where I could just show up in front of her who was so desperately looking for me, and I actually had to help Charlotte's sworn enemy.

And the gang was now on the Princess' radar. I didn't know about Bertus, but the princess would absolutely wipe out the Rotary Gang if I were to pull some crap. She'd probably bring up my connection to the Thieves' Guild to the teachers and might even get me kicked out of Temple.

It was useless feigning ignorance as well. Charlotte had everything figured out

already.

She didn't know the most important details, but she did know all the facts that would be bothersome to me.

I couldn't tell Bertus what Charlotte instructed me to do. Just telling him would leave me with a servered head. If he asked me later, what I talked about with Charlotte, what should I tell him?

Both Bertus and Charlotte were looking for me. Bertus for retaliation and Charlotte for protection.

Things had become twisted.

Anyway, what happened to Dyrus? I couldn't even ask Charlotte, but I was curious. If Duke Salerian retaliated against him, he wouldn't be in this world anymore. I could only hope that Charlotte was protecting him well.

Who was I worried about now?

Both heirs to the Imperial Throne wanted me to do something for them. It would have been better if I only had something to do with one side, but I was vaguely intertwined with both of them. What a dog like situation.

That's what it was.

Charlotte's matter needed to be discussed separately. And it wasn't just that.

I also had to prepare for the duel with Art later this week. It was clear that he would beat me into a bloody pulp when that time came, but after that he wouldn't be able to do it so easily anymore.

* * *

I went back to the dorm, when someone called out to me.

"Hey, you beggar."

"What?"

It was Harriet de Saint-Owan. When I reacted she covered her mouth and laughed.

“Huh? I didn’t call you though? I just said a word. Are you a beggar?”

Was she trying to get back at me using the same method I used on her?

“Huh, I am, right?”

“Hu, huh?”

When I said yes, that girl’s expression turned into a puzzled one as if this wasn’t the reaction she was looking for. I never set her up as that kind of character, so why was she so cute?

She was like a little kid that thought she was smart. She was so damn cute, I couldn’t even get mad at her.

“I’m a beggar, you’re right. So what is it?”

“Huh, uhm… Ah…”

What she expected me to say was: “Don’t call me a beggar!”, however what she got was a: “You’re right”. So, when I asked her what she wanted she seemed flustered, as she probably didn’t have anything to say to me.

“I heard. That. I heard, you’re going to have a duel?”

Why was she pretending to have heard it from somewhere when she was right there when it happened? No matter how one looked at it, this was just a question she came up with on the spot.

“Yeah.”

“That senior is a very scary person. You’re going to be beaten up pretty badly, you know?”

“Where you’re right, you’re right. I wonder if he’ll kill me.”

She seemed taken aback by my nonchalant response.

"……Aren't you scared?"

"Am I scared? To the point where I'm about to pee myself."

She seemed even more confused when I casually told her that I was, in fact, scared. She knew I was a troublemaker, but it seemed like my evaluation was being revised as a completely incomprehensible person.

"Then why did you accept the challenge if you're scared?"

"I know, right? Maybe I'll just happen to turn it around somehow."

I didn't say anything like: "I'm trying to awaken my supernatural abilities by putting myself into extremely psychologically pressuring situations".

Harriet stared at me as if I was crazy. Eventually, she shook her head.

She even had a wicked smile on her lips.

"Then I guess I'll have to watch if you really get beat up."

"Yeah."

"……Hmpf!"

I headed to the gym

And it seemed like our conversation was surprisingly calm just now.

* * *

My physical abilities weren't that far behind my classmates, they weren't comparable to those with combat talents, obviously.

Of course, people like Erich Lafaeri who had a combat talent but didn't put in any effort was out of that equation.

The Class A dormitory's gym, there were two students holding training swords and beating scarecrows alone or practicing their posture.

A-2, Ellen Artorius and A-5 Cliffman, only those two. Those two practiced every day according to their own routine. They didn't go out to play on the weekends and just practiced all day long.

However, the two of them were training separately while still being in the same space and there was a 100% chance that they haven't even held a single conversation with each other up until now.

For now I just picked up a training sword.

But how was I supposed to practice swordsmanship? They were just swinging around their sword by themselves.

I usually described it as "They did swordsmanship training" in my novel without going into detail. Leveling up was roughly the same, I'd just say they ranked up or leveled up. Or it would just be as blunt as saying, they've gotten better at this or that.

I asked neither of them to teach me, so they didn't. I just started swinging my sword.

Of course, it wasn't all random. I tried recalling the swordsmanship moves I learned last week and traced it while replaying that memory in my mind. I trained techniques and swordsmanship moves while looking at the provided manual. There was just too much work to be done to condense it in just a single word.

I realized that the strength of my wrist and forearm muscles had to be supported, the foot work was important as well.

I couldn't believe those two were doing this on their own every day.

The two silently wielding their sword started to look incredible to me again.

* * *

"Huff… Huff…"

After dinner, Ellen continued to wield her sword, and even after Cliffman returned to the dormitory, she continued to train alone.

Of course, she didn't just swing her sword, she seemed to be doing other things like going somewhere and coming back after. Eventually, after some time passed, I was

the only one left training and wielding the sword.

Would this even make a difference?

I only did this for one day, but I already felt exhausted and tired. I had to get used to training in itself, not just because of the duel next week. I can't believe in my mad dog act forever.

That's what I realized.

The third graders didn't come even after it grew dark. In the end, as I expected, they didn't want to touch the Prince directly. And those guys forced the second graders to do such a thing for them.

The third graders didn't come. However, an unexpected person entered the gym.

"……"

"Junior. I heard you were here."

It was Adriana, the second year senior with a calm demeanor.

She furrowed her brows as she looked at me sprawled out with the training sword beside me, sweating profusely.

"What are you doing here?"

"…Redina requested me to come."

"That kid?"

What did she ask her that for?

"Yes, Art seems to be looking forward to this a lot, so he might beat you half to death. She tried to stop him."

She was such a good girl, to the point that I felt really sorry for being so harsh to her. Adriana sighed when she saw how exhausted I was.

"But looking at you now, it seems that you're trying to do something at least."

“Well… More or less.”

“Just because you do this for around 2 weeks doesn’t mean you’ll be able to beat Art. You know that much, right?”

Adriana didn’t seem to understand what I was doing.

‘Why the hell are you accepting a duel that you’re obviously going to lose and wield your sword in the training hall until the point of nearly killing yourself? There’s no chance of winning.’

That’s what she was trying to tell me.

“I have to do something.”

“You will lose. Miserably at that.”

“I know.”

“…Just apologize now, before you have to suffer through greater humiliation. You certainly realize that you’re going a bit too far. Art isn’t as bad a kid as you think.”

“I don’t think he’s a bad guy.”

I could fully understand why he threw the glove after being subjected to something like that. He was humiliated by his junior. Adriana slightly bit her lip.

“You know you will lose and you also don’t think that Art is a bad person, so why do you want to go on with this duel and not apologize?”

“Just because.”

I got up again with my training sword and started practicing my posture.

“I, have to get hit.”

“……What?”

“That’s it.”

It’s not that I want to get hit, just to get hit.

-Whoosh! Swish!

I had to get hit to overcome this difficult situation. Adriana stared at me for a long time, then sighed.

“Junior.”

“Yes.”

Adriana slowly approached me as if she wanted to stop me and took the sword from my hand.

Then she lightly performed the moves I had been trying to do up until now. Looking in the mirror, it was not comparable to the clumsy moves I displayed. They were nearly perfect moves, like a sword dance.

“…Why are you showing me things I can’t even imitate…”

Adriana sighed as if she herself couldn’t understand what she was doing and returned the training sword to me.

“Try.”

I then tried to demonstrate the exact same movements Adriana just showed me using the scarecrow.

“……”

“……”

We both looked at each other silently. She approached me, grabbed my arm and shook it around. It was definitely limp because I felt rather exhausted at the moment.

“It won’t do you any good if you try to do this while you’re all out of energy. You’ll just hurt your wrist.”

Adriana looked at me with pity, and then suddenly closed her eyes. A bunch of white lights appeared from her hands and began to tickle my body.

“Thi, this is…”

“…Ah, you don’t know.”

Then Adriana opened her eyes again.

“I want to be a Paladin.”

She seemed to have talents in both divine power and swordsmanship. Second year, A-2, Adriana. If she was Class A’s number 2, I was assuming that she had even more talents.

She certainly was incredible, as she was able to use divine spells at her age.

She restored my vitality with a divine spell just now. All my muscle aches and fatigue certainly had been completely relieved.

“Now, try again.”

“Yes, thanks.”

My strength should have been restored. While carrying gratitude in my heart, I tried to trace Adriana’s movements again.

“……”

“……”

Nothing had changed.

CHAPTER 43

'Your basic fitness level is too low. Junior, you should do physical training, not holding a sword.'

Adriana let out a deep sigh when she said that.

'Why do I even care about this kid?'

'Wake up 2 hours earlier than the standard wake-up time and wait in the main lobby."

Whether she was concerned or just plain annoyed, Adriana didn't seem like she could leave me alone.

Anyway, I did feel grateful for her help.

I wondered why she was helping a rowdy junior who was about to duel with her classmate.

The next day.

I was in the lobby at 6 o'clock, well before the standard wake-up time, wearing a track suit. As it was 6 o'clock it was still dark out, but there were still some people here.

This was because the students who wanted to train their physical strength in the morning gradually came out.

Ludwig and Ellen were also there.

"Reinhardt? What's going on? So you want to exercise?"

"Yeah, well."

"That's good! So you want to do it together then?"

It was good that he was so energetic, but I didn't think I could keep up with him.

“No, I think my heart would burst if I were to try to follow you.”

“Is it that bad?”

“Yes, I’m pretty sure it is. Go alone.”

Running beside him would mean committing suicide. Even Ellen couldn’t keep up with that. That’s what it meant to have A+ Rank stamina.

“Ellen! Do you want to run with me today?”

“No.”

Ellen answered curtly and went out of the dormitory lobby. Ludwig looked at Ellen who gave him the cold shoulder like always and smiled at me.

“Does Ellen hate me?”

“I don’t think so.”

She just doesn’t care about any of us.

After sending him off for his morning workout, Adriana, with her shoulder-length bob tied in a ponytail, came down from the second floor, after a while.

This senior of mine was very calm and had a modern style beauty to her. She looked like a modern high school girl.

I bowed my head slightly and Adriana nodded her head towards me to answer my greeting. Adriana was probably the most polite person I had dealt with up until now.

“Wouldn’t this make you look bad in front of your classmates?”

“What?”

“Helping me with physical training.”

“Well, you need to be a little more physically fit if you want to have a duel… Ung.”

She started warming up by stretching.

“That way, rumors about Art bullying a weak freshmen kid because of his own stubbornness won’t circulate.”

So, to protect Art’s honor was enough justification to help me out. That was what she meant. Anyway, I was pretty sure I would lose, but I was grateful anyway.

She seemed to be good at swordsmanship and aimed to become a paladin, and seeing her waking up at this time, she really was sincere and calm.

What the hell. Was she the perfect human being? Was she really a high schooler? It made me feel even shabbier for swearing at younger kids.

“Let’s go, junior.”

“Yes.”

Adriana ran ahead and I followed behind her.

* * *

“This is serious.”

“Haah… Haah… Huff…”

I ran to the point that I had a sweet taste in my mouth, but Adriana wasn’t tired at all.

She restored my strength by injecting divine power into me. My wildly beating heart gradually calmed down and my breathing stabilized.

What’s this?

I felt like I was running while taking a doping potion. My mind was exhausted but my body felt fine. This was a really strange feeling.

“Run faster. I’m also training myself, so it’s hard for me to also look after you, junior.”

“Ah, okay.”

My body and mind were driven to the extreme, but due to Adriana’s divine power, my body would always be restored to its original state. Rather, this almost drove me

mad. My mind was worn out, but my body continued to be active.

This was the first time in my life that I ever felt that way. I could continue to run, but my mind was in an even more extreme state.

“I, I feel really strange!”

“I mean, technically this is against the rules, but it would actually be stranger to not feel strange you know?”

I shouted while running and Adriana answered me. Normally, I shouldn’t be able to run anymore, but I kept running, so it was natural for me to feel strange.

“Huff… Huff… If Paladin candidates were to, huff, run a marathon… Huff… I’m sure they’ll all win… Huff…”

“If this method was actually allowed, then yes! And you’ll run out of breath if you keep talking while running.”

Adriana ran easily, even finding the time to rebuke me. There were quite a few people in Temple who trained themselves in the morning.

“The first year junior called Ludwig. He was the one sprinting around Temple, right?”

“Tha, that’s… How he was originally…”

“There’s no such thing, junior. He can do it, because he worked hard. Don’t just work hard today, keep doing this in the future. The Orbis Class kids do this every morning as a group. Our Royal Class’ lazy kids could learn a thing or two from them.”

Adriana was talking about one of Temple’s two pillars, the Orbis Class. It seemed like they would get up early in the morning and train together as a group. Regardless of major.

Were they part of the army?

“Hey, you told me not to talk… Huff… Why do you keep talking to me…”

“Yes. Sorry.”

I ran, ran, ran, ran, ran, ran, ran and ran. I almost lost my mind every time she healed me. It wasn't just running I had to do. Adriana headed to the gym and let me do strength training.

At that moment, I could truly feel how demonic her divine power was. When my muscles started to ache, she would heal them with her divine power, then send me to do more training and when the pain grew worse again, she'd heal me.

However, if she went on like that my muscle growth would be no joke. What would one call these kinds of steroids? Divine steroids?

"I'm doing this because you just lack too much strength. You should do some strength training on your own, but don't overdo it or you could ruin your body."

Adriana told me that I should think about carefully growing my strength and kept on checking on me even though she had her own training to do.

"If you exercise while forcibly recovering using divine powers, there's one thing you have to do no matter what."

"What?"

"Eat a lot."

I was more or less forced to maintain my physical abilities even after I completely exhausted my energy. That was why Adriana advised me to eat a lot more and more often than usual because I would suffer serious nutritional losses. Especial protein.

"That's the only thing I'm confident of doing today…"

"Hah, I suppose so."

Adriana smirked as if I said something funny.

I had never seen her smile before.

* * *

Even while completing her strength training she poured divine power into me and went back to it. She didn't use it on herself. Somehow, this seriously felt like I had a

heal-pack stuck next to me, when she started her work out.

If she were to travel to modern times, I was sure she would have great success as a personal trainer. People who would sell their souls for muscle growth would absolutely love her.

Though my body was fine, my mind was completely exhausted when I returned to the dormitory. I took a shower, changed my clothes and headed straight to the dining room. It wasn't meal time yet, but I was so hungry that the world felt like it was spinning around me.

No, I didn't think I really had that big of an appetite because the workout was just too intense, but I felt this strong compulsion to eat something, a feeling much stronger than just feeling hungry.

When it was time, the chefs would bring the food they prepared into the hall, but that didn't mean there wasn't a kitchen here. It didn't only include simple meals, but also late-night snacks that could be eaten at any time one wanted, as well as a kitchen equipped with all kinds of ingredients.

One could call upon the chefs to prepare some food for you, and sometimes the students even cooked themselves.

But how many of them would even be able to make their own meal? They had to try and maybe grill an egg.

And there was this setup I didn't know about.

"……"

Ellen, who had already finished with her physical training, was carrying a bunch of beef jerky.

She went out every morning to exercise, so she wanted to have something to eat before having breakfast. That's understandable.

But I remembered that she also ate a lot more at breakfast than others. What kind of metabolism did she have?

When I looked into the storage that held the snacks, I saw that it was empty. When I

turned around, I saw Ellen eating the beef jerky little by little.

“Is that all there is?”

“Yes.”

“Was there only beef jerky in there?”

“No. Originally, there was bread and some other things.”

Originally, they had prepared a lot of things, but it seemed like they didn’t replenish it often as there weren’t many people who ate those snacks. So it seemed like after eating this and that every morning, the only thing left was beef jerky.

“Is it good?”

“Not really.”

Ellen shook her head. It seemed like she ate it only because it was available, not because she liked it particularly.

No, how hungry was she?

I didn’t want to steal her food, so I ended up going into the kitchen. Fortunately, there were quite a few ingredients in the storage, so I didn’t have to eat raw meat as is.

I had no intentions of making anything amazing. I was about to die from mental exhaustion after all.

I just took some eggs and bacon and fried them in a frying pan. The fragrant smell of bacon spread throughout the kitchen. Then I just threw some asparagus in there to fry. Since I was told to eat a lot, I used a lot of bacon and five eggs.

I also wanted to eat some carbs, but I didn’t feel like cooking noodles or rice. That was just too much work.

After I was done, I placed the mountain of eggs and bacon, accompanied by asparagus on a large plate and brought it to a table in the dining room.

Ellen was still chewing on her beef jerky. However, she could apparently not help

herself twitching her nose when she saw me coming.

“Hey.”

“Yes.”

“Don’t eat that shabby food. Eat this instead.”

I had a bad temper, but I wasn’t a heartless person, you know?

When I handed her the fork, Ellen accepted it and sat across from me. I sighed when I saw Ellen eat some of the fried eggs.

“Hey, the storage is full of meat and eggs, why don’t you fry some instead of eating that tasteless stuff? Is it that hard?”

“I’ve never done that.”

“Why haven’t you done this before though? Isn’t that essential?”

“……”

Ellen stared at me smirking suddenly. I didn’t know why, but she looked somewhat sullen, like : “Why are you talking to me? Are we in the same situation?”

“If you don’t know how to, you should learn it. Kids these days… Anyway, eat up.”

“Yes.”

What am I doing when one doesn’t even touch a dog when it eats? I was going to eat too.

-Nom, nom, nom

No, why was she eating so fast?

“Hey, don’t cross the line. Eat at a human pace. Huh?”

“Yes.”

It didn't seem like words would get through to her, so I picked up my fork as well. But that punk ate half of it already, even though it was me who made it.

"Are you kidding me? You eat more than a beggar who hasn't eaten for days."

"…I'm hungry."

After she said that, Ellen curiously avoided my gaze.

She ate more than half of what I made in a single bite? This had crossed the line, honestly.

"You know that you have classes with me today, right?"

"Yes."

Today was Tuesday, I was taking the two consecutive swordsmanship lessons with Ellen. To my words, she nodded. She was quite insensitive, although she wasn't stupid.

"Be prepared for lunch then."

"?"

We were going for 2 rounds of cheonggukjang.

CHAPTER 44

It was a bit much to expect dramatic changes after just one day.

Nevertheless.

Current stats: [Strength 4 (F+)] [Agility 4 (F+)] [Dexterity 5.2 (D-)] [Magic 10 (C)] [Stamina 6.5 (D)]

My Strength increased by 0.5, Agility by 0.3 and Stamina by 0.6. I didn't exactly know why but I also confirmed that Magic also increased by 0.1.

Of course, as I explained before, the lower the level the quicker one could see developments. Obviously, this might also be the effect of going through Temple's curriculum in addition to that one day of training, but it was clear to see that the effects of that training while being influenced by divine power were enormous.

However, Adriana seemed to think that this wasn't a very good method, so there had to be a reason why it wasn't.

In addition, the fatigue this caused was actually just as enormous as its effects, as it felt like my body and mind acted separately.

Honestly, I wasn't quite sure if I would continue with swordsmanship in the future, but right now I could only learn things that were related to the body.

I tackled the swordsmanship theory and practical training with a different mindset from last week. There were no major improvements.

Ellen was an honor student and I was more on the inferior side of things even though I was also part of the Royal Class. I didn't care about the general class' people's looks. If I cared about something like that, I wouldn't be doing this.

In the first place, there were a lot of talents found in the Royal Class! I wasn't the weird one here! This had nothing to do with hard work! That's what I wanted to plead, but I couldn't do that, because they weren't looking at me anymore.

Of course, there were some guys who seemed to gossip about me because even though Ellen and I were both in the Royal Class, we were completely different.

However, there were just too many things I had to worry about to even graciously give them True Education. To be honest, I didn't even know those guys' names.

I had to be strong-minded. There would always be people wanting to pick a fight with me, and those who would want to repay the humiliation they suffered after they realized that I was just a weakass or after their skills had improved.

The duel in two weeks was only one incident. I had to continue my physical training. From swordsmanship to martial arts. I couldn't learn magic properly here to begin with, my supernatural power hadn't awakened yet, and I didn't have a talent for divine power yet, so I had to start from a completely bare ground.

The only thing I could believe in at this point was my body that would grow as I trained.

I couldn't end up as just a bad tempered guy. I had to have real power and I had to get out of Bertus' and Charlotte's hands eventually.

I didn't have any time to waste.

"……It's not as strange as last time."

Regardless of how it went last time, Ellen challenged the cheonggukjang again and ate it unexpectedly calmly.

As this was her second time eating it, she got used to it, didn't she?

"…That doesn't mean that it's delicious."

As if she tried to avoid any misunderstandings, Ellen added that.

But if she didn't like to eat this, why did she follow me here? Was it because I was buying?

Did I set her up to like free meals?

Still, she ate more than last time, and even burped.

She was quite the legend after all.

“Hey, aren’t you more of a beggar than me for always eating the food I buy?”

When I took a stab at her after we left the store, Ellen just looked at me. Rather than staring at me, it felt more like she was lost in thought.

“Then I’ll pay next time.”

What’s this?

She just smoothly answered with a promise to eat together again next time.

Did she maybe think I was actually a pretty good guy?

Ellen, of course, left without saying goodbye this time.

Such an ungrateful kid.

* * *

Since I didn’t have a specific skill yet I didn’t have much to learn in class.

I dropped the magic classes with the permission of Mr. Epinhauser, and horseback riding was added in its stead. I thought that I might end up having to ride a horse one day.

I was so scared, I almost peed myself. I was supposed to ride on some wild beast and entrust my life to it? Were they crazy? I should have made the setting that mana cars or something existed.

I also realized once again that the horse riding skills of Dyrus, who let me ride with him when we escaped the Demon King’s Castle, were top class.

I had already exhausted all my mental strength in the morning training, but I couldn’t take a break. After class, I reviewed what I had learned today until evening at the gym, as well as some physical training.

When I was completely exhausted and couldn’t move anymore, I kind of missed Adriana’s divine power.

I wondered if she would also come in the evening, but she didn't. Honestly though, my conscience wouldn't allow me, making her help me out more than she already did.

However I didn't forget what Adriana told me, I had a big dinner, and after a short digestive break, I went for a run, followed by some strength training.

I thought I was overdoing it, and this would have originally been enough to hurt my body. However, thinking that Adriana would somehow be able to handle this, I kept on pushing myself harder.

"Gasp… Gasp…"

The sweat on my hands made the training sword slip out of my hand.

Did I really have to do it like this? I was far from a person who enjoyed exercising after all. I didn't really have the willpower to do something like that, and I just kept on writing stories in the corner of my room. I neither liked nor had a talent for putting that kind of effort in things.

I had that thought a dozen more times when I felt out of breath and my fingers trembled in exhaustion.

I was bound to lose that duel anyway. This was something I should worry about in the future.

So I should just take it easy.

Even if I do my best, I wouldn't be able to beat a guy who was a year older than me with just two weeks of training.

Whenever such complacent thoughts entered my mind, I forced myself to hold my sword tightly.

I was sure that I would lose that duel in two weeks. However, I shouldn't be complacent just because I knew I would lose.

I wasn't doing this shit to beat a senior one year older than me.

"Hup!"

-Pok! Pok! Pok!

Because of my carelessly scribbled developments, gates would soon open, leading many people to die. I might die as well.

I did this so I wouldn't die later.

I might work myself to death now and it's still far in the future, but I'd regret it later if I didn't do something now.

I felt regret enough over the development of this novel. I didn't deserve to be complacent or lazy.

Right now I was just some nasty bastard.

I might even look like dirty, cruel bastard to some.

"Hup!"

-Pock!

There weren't any manwha-like developments like that scarecrow getting smashed to pieces by my swings.

"Hah!"

-Pock!

However, I added countless scratches to it.

* * *

In some dating simulations, there would be sequences in which you could decide where you would like to spend your free time. If the setting was a school then there were places like the music room, the gym, the science room, the rooftop etc.

In the case of such games, one would find a specific character in each location. Girls who liked to play instruments would be in the music room, ones who liked working out were in the gym and those who were really smart were in the science room.

So.

"…Those are passable."

"……"

I felt like I knew all the locations one could encounter Ellen Artorius.

She was sitting alone in the dining room eating sausages.

She would be in the lobby early in the morning, before she started her training. After that she would go to the dining room, then go to the gym after school was over.

And she would be at the dining room again, late at night.

I came here to supplement my diet in advance, because I would feel super-dead after training with Adriana tomorrow, but Ellen was already here. She probably came here to eat after training like this every day.

I opened the cabinet meant for snacks and saw that it still wasn't refilled. What? Then what was she eating?

"Are you eating that as is?"

She had a tray full of sausages, munching away on them. At my incredulous attitude, Ellen pointed to the sausages she was eating.

"You can eat the sausages just like that."

"Yeah, maybe because they were smoked. But why do you just eat cold sausages?"

She ran out of snacks, so she rummaged through the food storage and found those sausages. They were already precooked, so she probably just ate them as is.

"Couldn't you have just turned on the stove, put them in a frying pan and rolled them around in there for a bit, before eating them? Is that so difficult to do?"

Use some cookware, for pete's sake!

I didn't put some kitchen disaster or ditz attribute on you! I mean, you were

supposed to be smart!

Why was this intelligent person acting like a bum?

Ellen shook her head at my words.

“Too annoying.”

“You don’t know how, do you?”

“I haven’t tried.”

You were telling me that you were too lazy to find out how to use them. She had such an annoying attribute. This scene made me angry just by looking at it.

“Give them here.”

“……”

Ellen looked at me quietly when I took the plate of sausages. What? Were you telling me to give them back to you? If you really were a gluttonous character, that’s what you’d do, huh? However, she didn’t tell me to put the plate back down, she just looked at me.

Either way, I took out some more sausages, put them in a frying pan and heated them enough to consume at least. Why was she eating raw food that was of even higher quality than regular sausages made with the finest ingredients?

When I took the sausages from the stove, Ellen was still staring at me.

I could see now why she stayed still.

“Did she think I would make things for her in the future as well?”

I felt like she knew for certain that I would fry the sausages. That was why she stayed silent.

As I said, I may be an ill tempered person, but I wasn’t completely cold-hearted.

So even though I had that kind of temperament, I would still share this meal with

this cold person.

We started to eat the sausages with a fork.

“How good is this, huh? The juice is practically bursting out of it, and here you were trying to eat it raw like a dog on the street.”

Ellen continued to eat, ignoring my nagging. It didn’t matter what I said, she wouldn’t particularly care.

‘I’ll eat it anyway, woof.’

Was that it?

I ate some sausages for a while, before I put down my fork.

Ellen did the same.

“Salty.”

“Yes.”

Ellen nodded at my words.

Since we only had sausages, it tasted really salty with nothing added to it. Usually it would make sense to have rice as a side dish or maybe even a loaf of bread.

I wanted to eat more as I only had water and sausages, but I was too tired to make more. Ellen didn’t seem like she wanted to leave, I didn’t either.

There were still fifteen more sausages left.

“Phew…”

I thought I was about to die because I felt so tired all over. It would be a waste to just throw these away. That said, we should make something with the leftovers, but seeing that she is only ever made me work, I felt kind of annoyed.

“Hey. You do exactly what I tell you to do from now on.”

“?”

I was done volunteering.

She had to do something for her food now.

* * *

“Like this?”

“Yes, you’re doing good.”

Seeing the onions finely chopped, I nodded my head. I didn’t really know how different handling a sword was from handling a cooking knife, but Ellen was able to do exactly as I ordered.

I guess it wasn’t a matter of being able to handle swords well, but a matter of having high levels of dexterity.

“Do you really not know how to cook?”

“No, this is my first time.”

It seemed like today was the first time that she touched a kitchen knife ever. But seeing the level of her skill, even as a chef she’d do well. Of course, she was too talented in combat to actually become one.

“Next are the carrots, same thing.”

-Kakakakaka

Watching the carrots getting chopped up in an instant, I proceeded telling her the next step. It felt like I was controlling a virtual avatar.

I could do that as well, but I couldn’t at the moment.

I was so exhausted that I was rather confident that I would cut my fingers if I were to take up the kitchen knife.

I had no intention of doing anything too complicated. There were a lot of different

cooking utensils and ingredients in the kitchen, but it was night time. It was just too annoying.

They had rice, but I was too tired to actually cook it. Of course, I didn't want to make new bread out of the flour as well.

So what I was going to do was stir fry vegetables along with rice in a pan with oil, then add water, put the sausages in, and boil it like porridge. It's visuals didn't really matter to me. So what if it was a sham version of a honey porridge, as long as it was edible. It could maybe be called a Risotto?

It didn't really matter to me and Ellen , who successfully managed to finish my introductory class to cheonggukjang.

To begin with, by my standards she seemed to have the taste buds of a wild dog as she was eating the sausages raw.

She'd eat anything as long as it was edible, or so it seemed.

Ellen began to stir, adding in the vegetables and rice, including minced garlic, just as I ordered. She seemed to be the type of person who would do what they were asked to do in the right circumstances.

She deserved to be called my best midnight snack cooking student.

"Remember it, and from now on, cook for yourself. You come here before me after all."

"Annoying."

She didn't want to do it, but it's not like she can keep on getting fed by others. It was interesting though that she did something she thought was annoying when someone ordered her to do it. Of course, it was probably because the sausages tasted just too salty on their own.

I put in the sausages and water at the right timing, and soon they began to boil in the pan. I put in some herbs. The sausages were already salty enough, so I didn't season them separately.

After the random sausage porridge was completed, we brought it back into the

dining room.

Ellen scooped some of it up with her ladle as if there was nothing more to care about.

“!”

Then she opened her eyes wide.

Of course, it wasn’t because it was particularly delicious.

“Did you think it wouldn’t be hot, shoving it into your mouth right out of the pan like that?”

“!!!!”

When I gave her a glass of water, she gulped it right down. She was obviously smart and she had a good physique.

Was she the type that would get stupid because of her own hunger? Would she turn into an idiot faced with food?

“How is it? Much better, right? Huh? Isn’t it delicious?”

As I looked at her who kept eating after it cooled down, she stared back at me.

“I made it.”

“What? You just moved your arms, it was me who actually taught you how to make this.”

“But it was me who actually made it.”

What? Was she arguing with me right now? Was she picking a fight?

I’m 100% sure that she would overpower me in a 1-on-1. Should I continue this?

Ellen scooped up a spoonful and blowed on it this time, then she said:

“We made it together.”

Somehow I felt like some petty bastard, so I didn't say much after that.

No, I wasn't just like a petty bastard, I actually was one.

* * *

When I returned to my room after having a midnight snack with Ellen, I found that someone was in my room. I thought it was an employee. Since the dormitory employees cleaned the rooms of the Royal Class students.

But they would usually clean up the room in the morning when I had classes. It was a little unexpected for them to be here at night like this.

I had nothing in my room that shouldn't be seen. I organized and remembered the student list and then destroyed it. The worker in maid clothes seemed roam around my room, but didn't seem to pay any close attention to me.

However when I entered, the employee came over and closed the door on my behalf.

"……?"

What?

That was weird.

The employee looked at me and spoke briefly.

"Your Highness."

"!"

"I'm Sarkegaar."

I couldn't even imagine how they planned on delivering messages to me, but it seemed like they'd actually just bring them to me personally!

CHAPTER 45

Just like I was able to casually enter Temple, Sarkegaar would be able to do the same, even though Temple had many security measures. But coming to my room as a maid in the middle of the night…

Come to think of it, Count Argon Pontheus, Sarkegaar's cover, was a man.

What was Sarkegaar's actual gender? Were they a species who didn't have something like that?

"How did you get into my room?"

"It wasn't that hard to do."

Sarkegaar had the master key all maids had. Well, there should have been several ways for him to get that thing. I also had to talk to Sarkegaar because there were many events complicating my situation.

"In the future, instead of you coming to see me, I will come directly to you."

Sarkegaar was good at transforming himself, so it would be possible for him to contact me without being caught. Perhaps because of the time and place, Sarkegaar didn't lengthen his words with useless rhetorics.

"First, about the Princess' supernatural ability."

"Yes, did you find out?"

Sarkegaar shook his head at my words.

"I'm here to report what I found first, although I could directly find it out if I take on some big risks."

Although he did not find out what her ability was, he decided that he needed to report to me what he found in the process first.

“First of all, even within the Imperial Family, the talks about the Princess’ supernatural power are divided. In particular, those who belong to Prince Bertus’ faction seem to be skeptical. They think the reason for the information about the Princess’ supernatural ability not getting revealed is because it was fake to begin with.”

“Meaning that even Bertus doesn’t know what ability the Princess has.”

“Yes. Your Highness.”

The Prince didn’t know what abilities she had. That could mean that Charlotte isn’t really a supernatural power user. In the end, that just increased the possibility that her taking the supernatural power classes itself was just to cover up her lie to belong to the Royal Class.

“That means the Emperor is the only one who knows for certain about the Princess’ abilities……”

It was possible that the supernatural power teacher who took Charlotte to a seperate room knew, but even then there is a chance that she actually doesn’t do anything in there.

Even Bertus couldn’t figure it out with his authority.

“Then there were only two other people beside the Emperor who knew about it. The Class B homeroom teacher Mr. Mustrang and the teacher in charge of Charlotte during the supernatural power classes.”

“I guess so.”

The authenticity of the Princess’ supernatural power was highly confidential, so neither of them would go anywhere running their mouths about it. Both of them were great people who couldn’t be easily touched.

They were teachers at Temple. And they were a teacher in charge of the supernatural power lectures who had to control students with dangerous abilities and a Royal Class homeroom teacher. Neither of them were ordinary people.

“So, what did you mean by taking big risks?”

“If there were people who shared the secret, I could disguise myself as one of them, however it’s difficult to find out a secret that only a few select people know.”

Mr. Mustrang and the supernatural power teacher both resided in Temple. And they both weren’t people that could be led on so easily. They held important positions among the Temple teachers after all.

“Hmm… This certainly is a strange situation. Not knowing whether her powers are real or fake…”

Did she lie that she had supernatural powers as to not fall behind Bertus? If so, how long could that lie even last? That being said, the Emperor approved of her using a fake supernatural power to get in.

Was that why only a small number of teachers, including the first-year Class B homeroom teacher, Mr. Mustrang, were aware of the Imperial Familiy’s lie, to keep them in check?

What if it was actually real? Why would they hide her ability, if it was real though?

I didn’t really have to think much to get the reason behind that.

“If she really has a supernatural ability, then it’s something that can’t be revealed to others easily… It had to be a very problematic ability.”

“My thoughts exactly.”

Imperial honor or Imperial prestige.

It was an ability that could probably damage either of these, so what the hell kind of ability did she have?

“Okay, if it’s too dangerous, let’s just bury this. The truth will come out one way or another.”

“Yes, Your Highness. That is a wise decision.”

Sarkegaar answered as such. We should forget about the Princess’ ability for now.

“I have something to tell you.”

“Was there an accident?”

I was going to have a duel next week, but I didn’t think that was something I should tell that guy. He would probably just get angry, asserting his uselessly over-the-top loyalty.

“It’s about the Princess again.”

“Yes.”

“The Princess is looking for me.”

Sarkegaar didn’t seem to understand what I was talking about for a moment.

* * *

Hearing my story, Sarkegaar’s expression turned grave.

It was true that this was a serious issue that couldn’t even be compared to that duel. If we did one wrong move, not only I but the foundation of our activity, the Rotary Gang, could be blown to smithereens. When I told him that even Bertus started paying attention to me, Sarkegaar’s expression became even more serious.

“Temple is a much too dangerous place for Your Highness. You should avoid this place……”

“Even if I get to live, the Gang would definitely get blown up.”

If I were to disappear, Charlotte would wipe out the Rotary Gang. Money was very important for us.

This kind of just happened by chance, but now the Rotary Gang had become our most important source of money. In my case, I didn’t necessarily need that money anymore, but Sarkegaar needed it a lot.

“What a funny thing. For the Princess to become a problem like that, even though she should be in your debt…”

That was something that shouldn’t come out of your mouth, Mr. Kidnapper. If it weren’t for you, I might have been able to actually reveal my identity.

Well, what happened, happened.

“Now I ended up having to do something as absurd as looking for myself, but I have no idea how to go about this. Should I just tell her that I died somewhere and fabricate some evidence?”

“That answer might satisfy the Princess. It would be the best course of action, but… We don’t know how the Princess will react afterwards.”

“That’s true…”

Suppose I would tell Charlotte that Valier was dead and show her some fabricated evidence. Assuming they would just take that manipulated evidence at face value.

Wouldn’t there be the possibility that they would just get rid of me and the gang after having exceeded our usefulness? It certainly would seem like a bad connection to have after all.

“If I bring them results, they might just get rid of me, and if I don’t, they’ll just get rid of me for being useless…”

I felt like I was in one hell of a dilemma. Whether I did it or didn’t there would be problems popping up, but when I thought about it a little differently, my head suddenly felt clear.

“Alright, let’s just do it little by little.”

“Little by little?”

“Yeah. She won’t touch us if we show that we are making some progress at least.”

Damn it, I didn’t want to have Charlotte as my enemy. Just to cover up for a small lie that got bigger and bigger over time, I would end up making up much bigger lies.

“Rather if they feel like we are seriously working on this, they would have to protect us, far from wanting to get rid of us.”

Bertus would continue to show interest in me as long as he thought I was useful. He was no different from Charlotte in that regard. I had to make some progress in finding Valier.

In the meantime, she would just continue to resent me, but wouldn't touch me, no matter what I did. Rather, she would try to help me if I or the Gang was in danger.

Both Charlotte and Bertus hid their true selves from the ordinary students.

That was something they had in common. Charlotte pretended to be a bit of a shy person in Class B, but the way she acted and spoke to me that day wasn't the least bit kind or shy.

It was as if they were made out of the same mold, so it would be the same no matter who of them became Emperor.

Anyway.

This wasn't a good situation at all, but let's think positively.

I didn't have to choose between Bertus and Charlotte anymore.

"Like this I'd be in a position where I could use both of them."

Sarkegaar smiled at my bold words.

"I'm amazed by your insight."

Could you stop smiling so creepily with that elegant face? It's giving me goosebumps.

* * *

My short-term goal was surviving that duel next week.

My long term goal was to prove my usefulness to Charlotte, and keep my activities from Bertus.

And my very long term goal…

"Gasp… Gasp… Gasp…"

"I didn't expect you to just magically improve after just one day, but this is really serious, junior."

Physical training.

Adriana made me recover my physical strength by injecting me with divine power after I was on the verge of exhaustion. A paladin was training the potential next Demon King with all her heart.

Actually, wasn't Adriana constantly sinning by doing that? If Adriana went to hell, wouldn't that be entirely my fault?

Anyway, we kept to that routine. To some extent, one needed a certain amount of physical fitness to be able to use swordsmanship. In terms of exercises, I was trying bench presses at the moment, but I didn't even have the strength to do a single one. What was the use of technology if one's basic abilities wouldn't be able to support it?

So, even if I thought that I was about to lose my mind, I had no choice but to clench my fists again, while feeling that strange sensation of my exhausted body normalizing again.

Following the morning training with Adriana and her advising me to eat a lot, I ate something before breakfast. Most of the time, I ate together with Ellen, who was a regular in the dining room. Since she requested for simple snacks, the storage soon got refilled with simple food that could be eaten quickly…

After listening to the lectures, I resumed my training until dinner.

Then after dinner, I'd train and eat something again before I went to bed.

After a bit, I reached the point where I could feel my physical prowess improving little by little, perhaps because I started off with a very low level of physical fitness and the support of divine power.

Thursday morning.

"Why don't you train using divine power?"

It was easy and quick growing with it, so why did she not use it? I asked her if there was a specific reason behind that.

"If one takes stimulants every day, one's body could end up hurt. That's the reason. Hunger can't be restored with divine power. I don't know if one would call it

blasphemous for me to say something like this, but it's not natural to grow with the support of divine power."

Divine power restored stamina, but it didn't replenish the nutrients spent. So, one could really call it a form of doping. So that was why she kept reminding me to eat a lot.

Was that stimpack?

"This is just temporary, you hear? If you want to reach a certain level, you have to do it on your own, junior."

"Yes, yes."

As if she wanted to clarify something, Adriana more or less told me that she won't keep on being my stimpack forever.

I knew very little about what was going on on Class B's and Ludwig's side, but they should be doing fine…

Originally, there would have been a scene where they were conflicting with the students from Class A who were trying to pick a fight over each and every little thing.

I attracted all of Class A's aggro, so they didn't even have time to care about Class B.

I, a big villain, took on all of the early villains' hatred and malice, so there was no "aggro" left for the main character.

What the hell? I didn't mean for that to happen.

Anyway.

I continued to train and train some more.

So naturally, I ran into Ellen a lot. Our daily routine was almost identical. We mostly ran into each other in the dining room and the gym.

That's how it was for the most part.

When I saw her eating whatever she felt like, I really had the urge to give her some of

the food I made. Of course, I took all the credit for that.

“You’re really lucky that you came to Temple.”

“Why?”

“With the amount of food you eat daily, you could ruin a whole household.”

Looking at Ellen, who had just swallowed a huge amount of pasta that I just made, made me feel like dying. I really wondered if there was perhaps a black hole in her stomach.

At my words, Ellen looked at me with a sour look on her face, spitting out:

“I didn’t want to come here.”

“……Huh?”

“Temple told me to come.”

“Huh, ah… I see.”

Was she arguing with me now, because I said that she could destroy a household like that? Wait, she was talking about herself, right?

She didn’t tell anyone about herself, so no one knew that she was that Warrior’s sister except the Prince, but here she was telling me that she was told to come here, because I scolded her for eating like a black hole. She didn’t want to come here.

That was what she had said.

Of course, I knew about her personal matters, but it was surprising that she told me a bit about herself like that.

She was right. As soon as they found out that Artorius had a sister, they begged her to come to Temple.

“Are you mad?”

“No.”

That made it clear.

I was the first who ever succeeded in making Ellen sulk.

* * *

The training was harder on the weekends. Rather, it felt like I could rest during the lectures on weekdays. On the contrary, I worked a lot more intensely in my free time, so the weekends were a hell of my own creation to me.

Adriana stayed longer than usual on those days, making me remember a lot of theoretical knowledge, trained me and made me eat a lot.

Sunday.

“Ah, that’s not how you do it.”

“……”

In the kitchen, I strictly watched Ellen cook. She came into the kitchen, saying that she would like to do it on her own this time, because I kept cooking for her. She probably was tired of me taking credit all the time.

The menu was presumed to be beef stew with a lot of tenderloin. When I asked her if she knew how to make that, she said that she ate it a lot at home.

“Hey… Huh? J, just do it like that. I just told you.”

“Is there any salt in there?”

“Ah, this is overcooked… You’re teeth will hurt if you try to eat this, you know? Is this supposed to train your jaw?”

“Something’s clearly missing in there… I’m not sure.”

“Add in the herbs with this timing…”

.

.

.

“……”

Ellen looked at me quietly as I continued to give her instructions.

“…I don’t think you should look at people like that while holding a cleaver.”

She continued to stare at me anyway.

“……”

Rather, she seemed angry! She just quietly looked at me while holding a kitchen knife. That was hella scary! Ellen looked at me a moment longer, then continued to concentrate on cooking again.

“Look at your temper. Ready to put a knife into me if I just say one more word, huh?”

Of course, my mouth never went into silent mode. She had a different kind of flavor from cute little Harriet. She didn’t seem to react at all.

Honestly, I felt like I had to admit defeat, because I was the one who got pissed instead.

Ellen finished cooking regardless of my extreme critique. She then took the enormous amount of stew and set it down on a table. No matter what you tell me, I thought she really wanted to make me angry.

I scooped up a bowl of the finished stew, and we each took a spoonful.

I stared at Ellen.

“……”

“……”

I was half-joking, but the result was the same as last time.

“Salty.”

“Yes.”

She did say that she ate it often at home, not that she cooked it.

Eventually, she went back to cooking according to my instruction, managing to make a decent stew.

“What do you think? Is it edible now?”

“Yes.”

“Of course, it is. Who do you think I am?”

“……”

As I poked at her until the very end, I finally saw furrows appearing between Ellen’s brows. I felt thrilled finally having made that stone Buddha angry.

Ah, I was quite the sadist, wasn’t I?

And then, Monday evening.

“That’s not how you do it.”

Watching me wield my sword in the gym, Ellen spoke to me casually.

“…What?”

“You don’t do it like that.”

Ellen began to take revenge for my extreme criticism and rudeness she received from me.

CHAPTER 46

The price for upsetting the stone Buddha was great.

“No.”

“No.”

“Even weirder than before.”

Ellen pointed out that all the sword techniques I displayed were wrong. Then, she demonstrated the right way to do the technique in front of me.

“This is how you do it.”

“……Uh.”

“Try it.”

Damn it. This was like getting hit by a boomerang. I was paying the price for poking at this kid to make fun of her. It really pissed me off.

As I clumsily followed her movements, she shook her head.

“No. That’s completely different.”

Ellen showed me the correct movements again step-by-step and told me to repeat them again. Of course, whatever I did, my moves were bound to look strange to her. I’m totally unskilled after all.

As a result, in exchange for making Ellen Artorius, who was like a stone Buddha, angry, she gave me specific training in swordsmanship.

The strongest person in my class was teaching me, so, in the end, this was a good outcome.

She was someone that wouldn’t have helped me even if I personally asked her.

However, she didn't do this to help me. Ellen, who got angry after my server criticism and teasing, gave me lessons to do the same to me.

The result was good, but the process was strange.

I didn't mean for this to happen, so I got more annoyed.

"Not like that."

Ellen repeatedly told me "Not like this, not like that." as if to retaliate for the lesson I gave her.

Wha, what…

In fact, I should feel thankful right now, as the girl with the strongest talents in the world who was also busy with her own training went out of her way to help me with my swordsmanship training.

That was how I should feel.

"…Why not?"

I was angry. I was even more angry because I didn't deserve to be angry. I was so mad, I had to change this up, and get back at her.

I.

I was the the total incarnation of a hypocrite. I found it funny to tease others, but got annoyed as soon as someone did it to me.

A child was a child, so there was no excuse for that.

However I was a somewhat screwed up adult, so I was a bit twisted.

"Hey. I know you're good at it. Uh. So if you're giving me lessons, why won't you teach me properly, huh?"

Facing my own ugly nature head-on, I became a little passive.

"So like this."

Ellen demonstrated moves that were close to picturesque. When she looked at me with curious eyes, wondering why I couldn't do it, it felt like she was poking at me thoroughly.

Yes, I was the perfect incarnation of a hypocrite.

See you later in the dining room.

I'll get you later.

* * *

After that day, whenever we made something in the kitchen and Ellen cooked I would criticize her and nag while giving her instructions. And when I was in the gym, Ellen would give me extremely strict lessons while I was practicing my swordsmanship.

It was like we were instructing each other. If one were just to hear these words, one might think what we shared was a beautiful friendship.

However, I didn't think what grew between us was friendship by instructing each other, but malice.

"Frickin hell, why don't you know something as simple as that? Don't you know what a measuring cup is? Or how to read a cookbook?"

"Annoying."

In the kitchen.

"You have to move your arms by this much, to that degree, like this. Why can't you do it?"

"Because I'm exhausted. It's been a few hours, if I were able to move like that in this condition, that would be hella weird, man."

"What about earlier?"

"…O, of course, I did better then! I was in better shape after all!"

"…If you thought that was better… Maybe you need to suffer a bit more."

"You're oh so great, huh?"

In the gym.

Like this we were building up that chain of malice caused by our extreme instructions.

By the way, even though she always said it was annoying, she definitely had fun cooking. She seemed tired of snacks. I could see that she was doing what I taught here even though she wasn't that good at it.

Technically, she genuinely seemed to want to learn how to cook for herself even after listening to my instructions, rather than just wanting to show off what she cooked to me.

I had to learn swordsmanship to increase my physical abilities anyway, so I did what Ellen told me to.

It wasn't just swordsmanship training.

"Try."

I also sparred with Ellen. When I rushed and stabbed my sword towards her, Ellen put her sword against mine and slid it outwards, and hit my solar plexus with her right shoulder.

-Puck!

"Kak!"

As soon as I fell, Ellen put her sword against my neck.

"You're dead."

This couldn't even be called sword play anymore, it was just a one-sided beating. Whatever I did, she just sent me flying in an instant.

"Wasn't that a body blow? That's a foul, isn't it?"

At my cheeky words, Ellen just tilted her head.

“There are no such things in a real battle.”

Those were some cruel words for a child to say, but she was right, so I couldn’t refute.

After that, Ellen taught me various forms of swordsmanship, offensive and submission techniques while practicing like that. Ellen knew a lot of things we hadn’t learned yet from the swordsmanship theory lecture.

It was true that it was more beneficial to train with a living partner than just stubbornly training swordsmanship techniques on your own.

I looked up her physical data out of curiosity. There weren’t any details, and a lot of her talents were redacted, but it did get announced in the classroom. It was like a simplified form of the status screen, so to speak. This was also used in the original.

Royal Class, Year 1, A-2, Ellen.

[Strength 16.5(B)] [Agility 18.3(B+)] [Dexterity 20.2(A-)] [Magic 23(A)][Stamina 15.3(B-)]

Talents

[Weapon Mastery][Magic Control]

It was very simplistic, compared to my status that the system displayed to me. Information that the physical scanner wouldn’t be able to grasp would not be displayed on it. For example, the rank of one’s swordsmanship or the skills one had.

Ellen had a lot of talent, but the list got reduced a lot by Temple, only leaving Weapon Mastery and Magic Control. Although she already had the comprehensive talent, Weapon Mastery, Magic Control was another one. It included the talents Magic Manipulation, Magic Sensitivity and Magic Growth.

Just by having these two talents, she was already far ahead of Bertus, and yet they dared to call her Number 2.

She wouldn’t even need a talent to be better.

Even when considering her physical abilities, Ellen far exceeded mine which were mostly ranked as F or D.

In the combat rank classifications, there is little change in the rank even if one's numbers increased and one reached a higher rank.

In that classification system, Ellen was already at a ridiculously high level.

Having a Status of S Rank and higher was at the level of a superhuman. In the first place, that rank could only be reached by someone of master level or higher.

I didn't know what her combat rank would be, but it would probably be above A Rank.

None of her classmates, or anyone from the Royal Class for that matter, possessed that level of physical ability.

"Urk!"

"Huk!"

"Kerk!"

"Uwark!"

.

.

.

Didn't it seem like that bastard was just using this as an excuse to beat me up?

However, I also realized a lot of things through that.

In the end, swordsmanship wasn't just about using the sword, but the whole body, including one's fists and feet. There were even techniques that implemented characteristics of grappling that included performing faints with the sword to grab the opponent's collar.

That was how I came to the realization that the arm that didn't hold the sword was also very important, whether holding the sword with both hands, to deflect the enemy's sword, to subdue the enemy empty handed or to catch the enemy's blade.

There were so many applications that I couldn't memorize all of them.

"Ugh!"

– Thud!

At the time, she flicked away my sword, she almost crushed me, not forgetting that strange action of pointing her sword at my neck…

"You're dead."

…telling me that I was dead after subduing me.

"You're heavy, man…"

Even if it was part of swordsmanship, don't ride on me like that. During our spars, Ellen showed me many different ways how one could get beat up with a sword. This time she showed me something dumbfounding.

"……Are you making fun of me right now?"

"What?"

"Are you now holding your sword upside down to beat me up?"

She was holding her sword blade and hit me on the head with the cross guard. When I saw that, I felt it was so ridiculous I almost froze. Was she insulting me?

Ellen shook her head.

"…It's actually a way to use it. Against heavily armed enemies."

"Is there really such a strange technique in swordsmanship? What if one ended up cutting their hand?"

"It won't cut that easily."

Ellen said that it wasn't only possible because this was a training sword, but I didn't trust her 100% on that. Anyway, as I already knew from first-hand experience, Ellen wasn't on the level of having to learn swordsmanship like my other classmates.

Ellen tried teaching me her swordsmanship, including how to subdue an enemy, and told me to try it as well. In other words, she beat me up so much that my losses couldn't be counted anymore, so in the end, she had no other choice but to explain it to me slowly.

She taught me how to deflect a sword, how to use my left arm without holding the sword, and finally something similar to toppling techniques to make your opponent fall, which seemed like they came straight up out of a martial arts game.

Still, I was starting to wonder if I could ever do these kinds of things.

"You're too slow, and your motions are clumsy."

Even while I was getting crushed under her, Ellen shook her head as if this wasn't it either. No, well, if I were a real adolescent boy, I would be really excited to be in this kind of situation right now! This is really crossing the line!

Couldn't she see that No. 5 Cliffman, who was standing beside us at the moment, clinging to his sword, was spying on us, wondering what we were doing? Couldn't she see him swallowing hard?

Wait.

Wh, why was she?

He, hey, hey!

She was looking at me as if I was just a little brat!

"Do it again."

Not only me, but Ellen was also covered in sweat as she was sparing with me for a long time now.

I thought that now was the right timing. My opponent was extremely arrogant and saw me as just a child.

As a result.

-Kang! Kakang!

“My arm will rip ooout!”

“It won’t.”

We were both focused on swordsmanship practice and the lessons.

* * *

The date of the duel was just after lunch time on Sunday.

And since Friday, Ellen was making me practice quit the strange things.

“Hold it tight.”

-Bang!

“!”

– Clink!

She slammed against the side of the sword I was holding while aiming forward.

The training sword, which escaped from my grasp, clattered on the gym floor.

“Every technique in the world is useless if you lose your sword.”

If you lose something that essential, you would end up dead.

“Your grip is too weak.”

My grip was so weak that I would lose my sword with just a single hit like that. Ellen tried to test my grip strength on Friday, so she slammed away my sword rather than just suppressing me, demanding that I held onto it tightly.

Not only did my hands feel tingly, the more we continued to train the weaker my grip became.

And.

-Katchin!

How long have we been doing that? When Ellen hit the side of my sword once again, the sword shattered.

“Wha, what…?”

As the sword got broken, my hand didn’t hurt, but did she really hit so hard that she was able to destroy a sword? Ellen looked at the broken training sword and picked up the remaining pieces.

“Training swords aren’t durable usually. They break easily.”

It looked like she already broke a few of them before.

“That’s what Temple uses though?”

“It would be a problem if the training swords had too high a quality.”

Training swords had no edge at all. It would be a big problem, if one were to ever get hurt by using these. And it seemed like they purposefully used poor materials because if it turned out too durable nothing good would come from that. Even if it didn’t have an edge, it could become a blunt weapon if one used enough strength.

“Don’t let go of your sword.”

“It’s not as easy as it sounds, okay?”

After the sword broke I plopped down on the floor. I couldn’t do anything anymore as my hands felt like they were about to break.

Grip strength was important.

As such Adriana kept on focusing on grip strength during her physical training. She continued training her grip, saying that a strong grip was essential in fighting with a sword.

Today, Ellen kept on testing if I would drop my sword or not by hitting it in different

angles.

Cliffman also went back to rest, so it was just the two of us in the gym. Of course, there weren't always just us three here. Bertus and Erich also came by sometimes to train.

Bertus had a strange smile on his face when he saw me train with Ellen. He didn't say much about my planned duel, although he seemed subtly proud seeing what I was trying here.

He kind of gave the impression of watching his great subordinate No. 1 doing well even if left alone.

In addition, there was little friction between me and the other children as I was completely focused on training for the duel. Well, some of my hindrances had already been cleared up, so the other children probably didn't dare to touch me.

Still, all of the kids were looking forward to Sunday.

It was the day when Reinhardt, the psycho bastard, would receive some true education. All those who hated my guts would come to see the duel.

"You will lose."

Ellen suddenly told me. This girl hadn't said anything up until now about my duel.

It would be weird for her not to know, why I was focusing on training like that all of a sudden.

"I know."

Everyone told me that I was going to lose, and I knew that. Ellen also knew I wasn't particularly confident about this either, so why was she talking about that so suddenly?

"Do you want to win?"

She even asked me things like that. I didn't know what her intentions were, but seeing Ellen ask these kinds of things, did that mean that we grew a bit closer at least?

Do I want to win?

“Naturally.”

It would be nice if I were able to win regardless whether it’s possible or not. I would get three times the points as my reward after all, my friend. Ellen didn’t even look at me up to that moment, but then suddenly she turned her gaze directly at me. Her calm dark-blue eyes stared at me.

She really was picturesque.

“I know a method for you to win.”

“…What?”

What did she mean? No matter how much I thought about it, there was practically no way for me to defeat a guy with a high level swordsmanship talent as well as a sophomore. I had no idea what it was, but Ellen seemed to know at least one method for me to win this duel.

“What is it?”

“……Think carefully what a duel is.”

That was all Ellen said.

“Wait, what are you talking about?”

I grumbled besides her, asking what the hell she meant, but she kept her mouth shut as if she didn’t want to tell me any more.

CHAPTER 47

The day before the duel.

On Saturday, I did my strength training with Adriana in the morning as usual.

She continued her training, while aiding me with her divine power.

Even after breakfast, Adriana called me back and gave me more training.

“Haah… Haah…”

I definitely felt that my stamina improved by a lot in that short amount of time. That rapid growth and this feeling across my whole body gave me some joy, even while I was in extreme physical and mental pain.

“Junior, don’t do anything anymore tomorrow morning. Stay in good shape.”

“Yes.”

Adriana could restore my strength, but if she did that and I did more, it would have adverse effects on tomorrow’s duel. I knew that much, so I was only going to train up to that point.

I didn’t really know what difference it would make if I maintained my best condition for this duel that I was going to lose anyway.

Adriana trained me in the morning as well as in the afternoon and sat with me on a park bench in front of the dormitory. She handed me a canteen. It was more than usual.

Due to the intense training, I couldn’t help but gulp down a ton of water.

“Phew…”

Seeing me exhausted, Adriana looked at me with a strange smile on her lips.

“Junior, you are really weird.”

“What?”

“I believe you have enough patience and perseverance in you, to the point that you could follow my lead very well so far. Why are you so rude to others?”

She seemed to have noticed that I wasn’t such an impatient, short-tempered guy during this week of training. However, she didn’t understand why I was being so rude to others, in fights and outside of them. To the point that I would disgrace my opponent like that.

“I don’t want to be ignored.”

“Huh?”

“Even if I put up with it once, there would be another guy picking a fight. Should I just endure it twice then? I’d just get hit again and again, that’s when you’re already caught in this vicious circle.”

Adriana sighed deeply at my words.

“Isn’t that tiring? Getting angry, fighting someone, bumping into them because you felt a little upset.”

“It’s just like that.”

After I drank all the water from the canteen, I stared blankly at the lush park.

“I think it’s better to get exhausted as a shitty bastard than a pushover.”

“Really… I can’t understand you at all.”

Adriana shook her head as if she didn’t understand a thing I said.

“By the way, there’s something I wanted to ask you.”

“What?”

Adriana stared at me as if she was willing to answer if it was within her capability.

“A classmate of mine said that there was only one way for me to win this duel, do you maybe know what she meant, senior?”

“Huh?”

Adriana thought for a moment, as if what I said was rather bizarre. The only way I could win. What was it that Ellen thought?

“That… I honestly don’t know.”

Adriana shook her head as if to show that she really didn’t know.

Okay.

Ellen wouldn’t tell me even if I grabbed her collar and shook her. Rather, I should just give it my best shot.

If I lose, I lose.

* * *

The time of the decisive battle had come.

Thanks to the training I did over this week I was definitely in much better shape than I was before, as I trained while being heavily doped.

Current stats: [Strength 4.8(F+)] [Agility 5.0(D-)] [Dexterity 5.9(D-)] [Magic 10.1(C)][Stamina 8.1(C-)]

My strength increased by 0.8, my agility by 0.3, my dexterity by 0.7, and my stamina by 1.6. I trained with Adriana to increase my strength and stamina, and I presumed that my dexterity went up because of the spars I had with Ellen.

So, why did my magic stat go up again?

There were some changes in the sub-menus as well.

Skills

[Demon Domination – D](Unique skill of Arcdemons)(Cannot be used in current

state.)

[Self-suggestion](Locked)

[Pseudo Swordsmanship]

Comprehensive Ability Assessment – Lowest level Demon

Combat Level Assessment – F+

…*What's with that?*

What was pseudo swordsmanship supposed to be? It wasn't even Rank F. It was just pseudo swordsmanship. What was that? Were they telling me that I couldn't even do F Rank Swordsmanship yet? Was I even unable to use the lowest level of swordsmanship or something like that?

The fact that my combat level went from F to F+ was also truly breathtaking. They should have just left it as F. F+ makes me seem even lamer.

That pseudo swordsmanship I barely obtained after such hard work was nearly crushing my heart.

In any case, there was a dramatic improvement to my physical fitness. My abilities seemed to have improved evenly, and if I continue to practice, I'd hit my limit someday, anyway. At that time, I would have to use achievement points or something, but first, I had to achieve whatever I could with my own body.

Afternoon.

First Year Class A's dormitory gym.

There were quite a few people now in this place where Ellen and I clashed swords repeatedly.

A lot of people came just to watch me lose.

Bertus was absent. It was the weekend, so it seemed likely that he returned to the Imperial Palace and wasn't particularly curious about my duel's results.

Everyone of Class A, except No.1 Bertus and No. 3 Liana de Grantz, were present. It was rather surprising that Ellen came to watch my duel. All the classmates that were present when I messed with this senior were here.

There were also some of Class B present.

“Reinhardt! Cheer up!”

“Ah, yes.”

Of course, the kind Ludwig came to support me. He seemed to have brought some friends with him with whom he was particularly close with. B-9 Delphine Izadra and B-10 Lanian Sesor. I never even held a conversation with either of them.

It didn’t seem like I would ever have anything to do with them in the future. Pretty funny that I didn’t have any connection to the kids I wrote about the most.

And she was a bit far from the others, but she also came to watch. Charlotte was watching silently from afar.

That was weird. I was sure she didn’t come to cheer me on. Rather, it seemed more like an investigation. Maybe she was curious as to how I would act in a duel, or she wanted to ask me about the progress in Valier’s search.

It somehow seemed like she was trying to confirm my usefulness.

There were other people, I didn’t expect to see here, for example, B-3, Scarlett. Her red eyes and hair made her stand out.

I didn’t have any connection to her either, so why did she come to look? I wouldn’t be very interested in something that had nothing to do with me. Strictly speaking, if I were her I wouldn’t want to go near Class A even more.

“Why did that cursed bitch come here? How unlucky.”

Scarlett came to watch my duel, even though she had no reason to. Erich, who seemed desperate to bully her, was also here after all. Although I stood far away from Erich, she definitely stared at me.

What was this?

Since this event never happened in the original, there should have been some motive behind her actions that couldn't be found in the original.

My classmates were made up of these kinds of people, and most of them would love to see me get horribly trampled. Ludwig excluded, I had no idea what Ellen was thinking. She was just squatting at some corner, looking at me.

"You're going to be in big trouble today, you beggar. Be prepared."

Harriet smirked behind her hands.

"Oh, Have fun watching."

"……Huh?"

"Have fun."

"Wha, what really…"

Harriet looked dazed again when I told her to have fun while watching me get beat up.

Preconceptions seemed to be very important. At first, I snapped at her a bit because I got annoyed, but when I thought it over again I couldn't see her as anything but a cute little kid, so no matter what she did, it seemed kind of endearing.

In other words, when I saw this girl, who I obviously set up as a villain, act like this I couldn't help but find it cute and she might have unexpectedly become my favorite character.

Because she didn't seem to understand what was going on.

On the seniors' side, it seemed like the entire Second Year Class A came. Seeing as there were more than ten people there, did some from Class B come as well? Did they want to see the face of the guy who dared to defy one of the seniors? Was it something like that?

The faces I could recognize were the duelist I was going to face, Art de Gartis, Adriana and the little brat named Redina who looked between me and Art with a teary expression.

I should really go buy her something later. I couldn't believe I said something like that to such a nice girl. My neck was going numb from just thinking about that.

She was such a good and kind girl!

Yeah! I deserve to be hit!

And then there was the observer, Mr. Epinhauser.

"I think we're ready, so let's go ahead with this."

Actual duels were actually held with one's life at stake. However, duels between students shouldn't be death matches.

Therefore, duels were only conducted under the supervision of a teacher who was able to restrain the students at any time.

Mr. Epinhauser didn't question why we were fighting. He was just doing what the regulations stipulated him to do, so he allowed us to do this.

If it were Mr. Mustrang, he would have told us not to do this. Their personalities were polar opposites.

"Art de Gartis who had his honor sullied by Reinhardt… I'll just read it as it was written in the report."

Mr. Epinhauser began to read the report done on the circumstances of our duel.

"On Saturday, two weeks ago, First Year A-11 Reinhardt grabbed the crotch of Second Year A-3 Art de Gartis and squeezed it hard…"

-Pffft!

-Kufufum!

-Oh my god!

Mr. Epinhauser read that part so seriously, that everyone around, no matter on what side they stood, began to laugh. Either way, the teacher just read it all to the end.

I also found this quite funny and Art's expression became quite weird. But I gotta say, Mr. Epinhauser was one hell of a guy.

"He claimed that he suffered from extreme mental and physical pain as well as incredible humiliation, which consequently damaged his reputation. Therefore he requested a duel, demanding an apology from Reinhardt, No. A-11, who accepted this duel. Am I correct?"

"Yes."

"Yees…"

Art didn't laugh, but I barely managed to answer in a slurred voice, because this was just too funny.

"State what you want in return for victory."

Art replied to Epinhauser's words.

"I want Reinhardt to kneel before his seniors and apologize for his disrespect and I want him to swear to always respect his seniors from that point on."

What he wanted for his victory was an apology and respect. What he meant was that whatever they decide in the future I should kneel before them and just nod my head. This time Mr. Epinhauser looked at me.

My reward for gaining victory in this duel I had a slim chance of winning.

"I hope that these absurd acts that the seniors were trying to impose on us so far will not be forced either on me nor my classmates anymore. Of course, they should apologize as well."

At my words, the children's expressions became strange.

Even if it was obvious that I was going to lose, they didn't expect me to say that I wanted them to stop bullying my classmates in return for victory.

What were they looking at me like that for?

It was a reward I wouldn't even be able to receive anyway.

“Good. Ars, the god of war, shall take the side of the righteous.”

Dueling was, after all, a barbaric act.

It was clear that God would only stand on the side of the righteous, so the one who won was always in the right. Whoever was chosen by Ars, God of War, would win. That just sounded like bullshit.

And then, right when Mr. Epinhauser was about to announce the start of the duel.

“Teacher.”

Art, unable to hide his displeasure, raised his hand.

“I will nominate a champion as my right as a duelist.”

This.

What the hell was he talking about?

A champion?

“Name him.”

“My champion is Third Year A-7, Mayarton.”

Art, with a distorted expression on his face, retreated and someone else took his place in front of me, receiving his training sword. The one who accepted it was laughing as if this situation was just too funny to bear.

Only then did I realize. Even if all the second years, including people from Class B, were here, the number just wouldn’t add up.

That meant the guys from Year Three Class A came here as well.

“So you were the guy who told us to come when the Prince was around, yeah?”

The third years were offended by what I said and took Art’s duel seat. I dared them to try and come at us when the Prince was around, but they couldn’t do it, so their pride was hurt, hence they wanted to take care of me themselves.

Art also seemed to have gotten forced into this rather than this actually being his will, and Adriana looked at this scene wide-eyed. I guessed she didn't know that this would happen.

The guy in front of me looked down at me with a fishy smile.

"Let's see if you're just as skilled as your dog mouth, Junior."

At that moment I finally realized what the only way I could win was.

Choosing a great warrior as my Champion.

A duelist could choose someone to fight on their behalf with their right.

Then I looked towards Ellen Artorius, who was squatting in the corner, staring at me quietly.

"……"

-Nod

She looked at me and nodded her head.

That was the only way I could win.

At that moment, Ellen signaled to me that she could be my Champion.

CHAPTER 48

Things were going differently from what I expected. I didn't think I would win this duel to begin with, but I never expected the third years to make their appearance. How cheap could these guys even get? You didn't want to mess with us when the Prince was around, but now you were trying to bully your juniors like this?

The odds of winning, which were already slim, now became slimmer, though this probably wouldn't change much.

However, that guy in front of me, Mayarton, kept staring at me as if he was thinking about how to truly educate me.

My classmates were equally surprised by the sudden appearance of this third year Champion.

If I named Ellen as my Champion she would be willing to come up. But no matter how good she was, would she be able to beat a third year? He had been at Temple for two years longer than her after all.

Maybe, she would win. I had no idea what Mayarton was like, but she should be more than enough to win. If one wanted to beat Ellen, one had to be a superhuman or someone who had reached the limit of what a human is capable of. I didn't think that this guy was someone like that. Someone as strong as that was very rarely found in Temple, so they wouldn't do something meaningless like this.

Perhaps because of this sudden change in circumstances, there was one more person whose mood changed slightly, besides Ellen.

It was Adriana.

She seemed angry beyond perplexity, confronted with this situation. That calm senior was looking at me quietly. I could tell just by looking at her eyes.

Her eyes seemed to tell me that she would fight for me.

Adriana, originally, hated this absurd hereditary tradition anyway. She even told me

that she didn't like her seniors all that much.

However, now that there was a third year standing before me, seeing that guy butt in in a duel against a first year, it seemed like she couldn't stand by anymore.

Adriana spoke to me with her eyes. *'Make me your Champion'.*

I thought I was going around fucking up my Temple life, but there were actually two people willing to fight for me. Had I actually been doing well?

"If there is no disagreement, the duel will begin immediately. If the outcome seems clear or if one side surrenders, the duel will end."

"Teacher. I have something I would like to suggest."

Mayarton looked at Mr Epinhauser and said:

"Can't we just make it a rule that the duel will end if either side surrenders?"

"And what would be the reason for that?"

"The result is already pretty clear after all. However, I want to teach some manners to this rash junior here."

So, unless I explicitly said I surrender, the duel wouldn't end? He would definitely win with the normal rules, but he didn't want the duel to end as soon as his sword touched me.

His purpose wasn't to defeat me, but ro crush me.

"Reinhardt, do you agree to these terms?"

I've been hoping for that, you bastard.

"Yes, but instead I have a condition."

"Which would be?"

Ellen and Adriana would both be willing to fight for me. Circumstances had changed, and I had been caught by a hell of a lot worse bastard than Art. Art probably would

have wanted to fight me fairly.

However, that guy definitely would treat me a lot worse than him.

The situation changed and so did my judgment.

“Mayarton is a third year, and I’m just a first year. There’s a clear difference in ability in not just a single area.”

Mr. Epinhauser nodded his head as if agreeing with me.

“I want to use my right as a duelist and…”

Who should I call?

“Ask the opponent for a handicap.”

I didn’t call for anyone.

* * *

When Ellen talked to me the other day she meant that if one thought about what kind of duel this was, one would think of choosing a champion.

However, when Art nominated his champion, I thought of something else.

A handicap.

If there was just too much strength difference between you and your opponent, you could give the opponent a handicap. That was the kind of situation I was in right now.

Neither Ellen nor Adriana seemed to have expected that I would use the handicap instead of nominating a Champion. Yeah, I wouldn’t have thought to use the handicap either if this Champion didn’t suddenly appear.

Mayarton burst out in laughter at my words.

“Junior, are you seriously planning on beating me?”

He was smiling, but seemed to be really angry. It was like he thought that I believed that I would be able to beat him if I just gave him a handicap. Mr. Epinhauser, the observer of the duel, nodded.

“Good. During the duel, Mayarton is forbidden from using his left hand.”

It wasn’t Mayarton who gave himself that handicap, but Mr. Epinhauser. Mayarton snorted at him and hid his left arm behind his back, as if that handicap didn’t matter at all.

Before I wouldn’t have thought that to be a big handicap either, but I had learned what an important role the hand which didn’t hold the sword played while sparring with Ellen. Having one arm sealed away was a huge handicap.

Of course, it would be very unlikely for me to surpass this power difference with just that.

Then, before everyone’s eyes, Mr. Epinhauser declared:

“Start the duel.”

Mayarton didn’t immediately rush at me. He held his training sword in his right hand and slowly approached me with his left arm hidden behind his back. I didn’t have a single strategy in my mind. Would the countless skills I learned from Ellen really work on someone like him? If I had some good skills, I might have been able to overcome this gap, but I only learned some things by sparring.

I didn’t even know proper swordsmanship yet. It would be arrogant to think that I learned it properly when I only just learned a few techniques.

That guy approached me as if he just went out for a walk, he wasn’t feeling wary of me at all.

“Did you freeze up?”

When the man approached me with his sword pointed forward and tried to enter my range, I pushed his sword to the side and tried to push in.

-Kang!

“Kurk!”

However, as if he saw through all my movements, he powerfully slashed at the sword I was holding with both of my hands, while he held his with one hand.

That shock forced me to take a few steps back. Even though I was holding my sword with two hands, it felt like my palms were going to tear apart.

“You’re weak.”

Mayarton stared at me, having been pushed a few steps back.

I was very confident that he’d be able to subdue me right at this moment, but he was trying to play with me. He was trying to trample my pride and make me realize that I was nothing in front of him. Mayarton leaned over his body and ran straight at me.

-Kang!

Then he started attacking me.

-Kang!

“Kuk!”

-Kang!

He attacked the sword I was holding, to be exact.

Intentionally.

-Kang!

“Urgh!”

– Clink!

As soon as I let go of my sword, he kicked me in the stomach.

-Pow!

“Cough!”

I realized something as soon as I collapsed to the floor together with my sword. Until I surrendered, until I bent my pride and surrendered.

That guy would continue this.

“What are you doing, Junior? Letting go of your sword like that.”

He kicked the sword I dropped towards me.

“Pick it up.”

-Claaang!

As soon as I picked up the sword, Mayarton rushed at me and hit the side of my training sword once again.

The sword slipped out of my grasp and rolled to the floor again.

Mayarton smiled at me.

“Pick it up.”

I could see now why Ellen trained me to properly hold my sword and not let go of it.

She knew that they would do this to me.

* * *

-Kaang!

The power of my grip was gradually getting drained away.

“I really don’t get it.”

-Thud!

“Urgh!”

Every time I let go of my sword, he would hit me with his elbow, kick me and knee me as if I was being punished for it.

“Someone like you, who has no skill or credibility.”

-Puck!

“Krrk!”

“Why did you decide to mess with us?”

He had no intention of subduing me. He saw me on the floor and kicked the training sword towards me.

He blew away my sword and gleefully watched me pick it up again.

The humiliation given by the act of having one’s sword hit out of one’s hand and made to pick it up over and over again was no joke.

I felt miserable and ashamed at the thought that I was only on the level of a toy for my opponent. Nothing had changed about that even if he was just a piece of trash that found joy in beating up his juniors who were two years younger than him.

I knew I would lose and I knew I would get humiliated like this. In addition to the humiliation I felt, the pain all over my body was enormous as what he was subjecting me to was more like corporal punishment than an actual fight.

I held my sword again, and it got slammed out of my hand yet again.

-Kaang!

My palms were torn and bleeding.

This was no longer a duel. It wasn’t a duel to begin with. He didn’t treat this as a duel from the start.

He just casually walked towards me, swung his sword lightly and make my sword bounce off. Then he kicked and slapped me when I was defenseless, treating me like a joke.

He looked down at me as if I was pathetic as I was continuously falling down and getting up.

“You’re nothing before a Swordmaster.”

-Pow!

“Urgh”

“Stay down, you bastard.”

-Pow!

“Ugh!”

“How good things would have been if you acted nicely.”

-Bang!

“Uggh!”

“You lost. Come on, say you surrender. That would be more comfortable for you, right?”

-Pow!

“Guh!”

“Do it.”

-Pow!

“Urg…”

“You won’t?”

– Pow!

“Well, fine by me.”

He kept insulting me, not showing the slightest bit of sympathy as I kept trying to get up.

I was a filthy bastard, but that guy was a little different.

That guy wasn't just dirty, he was cruel.

As I was trying to cover up my lack of ability with acting dirty, that guy did it by acting cruel.

And he was clearly incomparably stronger than me.

The more I got up and tried to resist, the more he seemed to be pleased rather than showing admiration for my endurance. It looked like that guy felt delight at his victim's futile stuggle.

I felt the atmosphere around me as I grabbed my training sword again.

There were no emotions in Mr. Epinhauser's expression and eyes.

However, most of my classmates' expressions were distorted.

There were cases like that.

In any kind of event, if one side was starting to lose miserably, there would be some who would unwittingly start to cheer for that team.

They don't want the other team to be so helplessly crushed, so they want them to do a little better.

Now I was on that miserably losing side.

Harriet de Saint-Owan, who showed delight at first at me receiving some true education, was also at a loss. Her complexion was completely white. She looked between me and Mr. Epinhauser. It was as if she was asking with her eyes why he didn't stop this fight even though it was clear who the winner was.

She had been imagining it, but she didn't think it would be like this.

I didn't know I would end up this miserable either.

Some were calm.

Ellen was still looking at me and so was Charlotte.

Rather, the people who loathed and hated me were the ones who got terrified. It seemed like they thought that I would end up dying like this.

Even though duels at Temple could be called child's play compared to actual duels, it was still a duel after all.

It wasn't at the level of a simple match.

The duel wouldn't end unless someone surrendered. Even Mr. Epinhauser wouldn't intervene unless my life was at risk.

I didn't even want that kind of intervention. Watching me crawl back up again, the other kids' faces distorted, not Mayarton's though.

It seemed like he wanted me to surrender.

He wanted me to admit defeat and back off.

I didn't know why I was doing this. In a complete mess, I looked at Mayarton with my whole body aching as well as my hands.

I wouldn't be able to win.

However, the wind seemed to be picking up.

Although I wouldn't be able to win.

That wretched, cruel, fucking bastard.

"You, I'll get one in."

"What?"

Even if I got crushed and trampled over, I would definitely get in a single punch.

"I'll fucking get you at least once, you son of a bitch!"

I would at least get one hit in.

The reality of my coming defeat or any plans I had about developing my supernatural power by putting me in an extreme mental state, all of that was forgotten in my seething anger.

I got hit too many times.

I was hit so hard, that all the heat rushed up straight to my head.

If I didn't get even a single bite out of that fucking bastard, I wouldn't be able to sleep for the next month or so.

I rushed at him with all the strength I still had left, and prepared to use something. If I would hesitate, he would either kick me or hit me with his sword.

I never planned on using this for something like that.

But, I was so fucking annoyed that I couldn't take it anymore.

[Used the 'Revise' Function.]

[20 Achievement Points are required to trigger this event.]

I hit the sword that blocked my eyes and made 'something that originally shouldn't happen' happen right at that moment.

His sword.

It shattered the moment my sword hit it.

– Kaang!

The sword that blocked mine broke, dyeing Mayarton's expression in surprise.

– Pow!

"Gah!"

At the same time as my training sword struck his head, I rammed my knee into 'the

place’ that started this whole duel.

CHAPTER 49

Training swords weren't made out of durable material.

I remembered Ellen telling me that. And the constant use of this particular one made this event possible. The less probable an event, the more achievement points it would require.

Conversely, if it was highly probable it would require relatively few points.

The event of a training sword breaking after constant collisions, wasn't that improbable. So, I was able to trigger this event using a very small amount of points.

It was definitely more probable than making someone highly trained in close combat suddenly fall over or surrender. In the end, I was able to land a blow using the methods available to me.

Knowing this pain, Art put his legs together, and the man in front of me grabbed his thing and stepped back with a painful expression on his face.

"U, urgh… This, this dog… This dog-like bastard…!"

Unfortunately, he didn't fall down even though he was sweating profusely. If he recovered from his stunned state, there would be more severe consequences for me.

His sword was broken, so Mr. Epinhauser took out a new one and threw it to him.

I couldn't give him time to pick it up.

If he recovered from his damage, I would be dead.

I rushed in while that man, who was shivering after being kicked in the crotch, clumsily tried to pick up the training sword.

-Thud!

"Aah!"

I didn't swing my sword, I hit him with my body. As I looked at Mayarton, who was still in pain, I held my training sword upside down.

-Pow!

Then, as Ellen showed me the other day, I slapped him in the head using the cross guard.

She told me that it was used against heavily armed enemies, but now I was using this to stun that guy.

-Bang!

"Argh! Y, you son of a bitch!"

If I were able to use my full power, this would have ended in his head splitting open, but because I lost a lot of my strength it only made him feel some pain. I hoped he would at least faint.

-Thud! Pow! Pock! Bam!

While he still hadn't recovered yet from the pain, I kicked him, trampled on him and slapped him in the face.

However, his body, which had been trained to the limit, didn't receive any meaningful damage. He squatted and endured all my powerless attacks. It was the same for him. The fight wouldn't end if he didn't surrender.

He would just wait it out until he recovered.

-Thud!

"Argh!"

And that moment came pretty fast. As he pushed me away, he took a step back and got up.

I had no time to relax. This senior's face was flushed red, probably because he got humiliated by a first-year junior.

What kind of duel was this?

It was just a dog fight.

This was just a quarrel between children with no pride, honor or respect. His eyes gleamed with life.

The expressions of the onlookers started to get weird.

I was helpless, but because I unexpectedly counterattacked, did they start to cheer for me? Did they honestly think I could win this even remotely?

“Yes, don’t ever surrender. Please.”

That wasn’t gonna happen. The senior was still waiting to recover or he was ready to stop me if I came anywhere close him. Right now, he was just watching.

I could surrender now. I paid him back after all. I could give up now. It would be my win in a sense if I surrendered now.

Something like: “I’m surrendering now to save your face”.

That would be the best way to make him angry.

That would be the case.

“Surrender? Yeah, won’t happen. I have no intentions of doing that, you bastard.”

I wanted to win.

“What?”

“I’ll, win this.”

After I gave him a kick to his damn jewels. Seeing his face distorted like that.

I tasted how sweet revenge was.

“You just managed to get in one cowardly surprise attack, and you think you’re gonna win?”

“Yeah.”

I wanted to win. I wanted to defeat this guy and grant him some behavioral training.

I wanted to make that bastard kneel in front of me and apologize.

So.

I wanted to win.

If I were to lose, I would have to kneel before that guy and Art and apologize. Getting beat up was shameful, but having to say that I was wrong when I didn’t even think that what I did was wrong was a lot worse.

I didn’t like that at all. I didn’t need some grand reason or convincing probabilities, I just didn’t want to lose. I mean, no one would want that.

I had to get beat up by this jerk in this unfair fight and then kneel to him and apologize right after that?

I wanted to see that.

I wanted to see what that guy, so convinced of his victory, who taunted me, stomped on and kicked me, looked like after he lay defeated in front of me.

I wondered what kind of miserable expression he would show me, denying his defeat and showing me an even uglier appearance.

I wanted to make this person who made me like this even worse off.

Hence.

I wanted to win.

I desperately wanted to win.

The guy came up to me. This raging attack won’t just blow away my sword, it would break everything in my body. If I allowed the next attack to hit, there would be no getting back up from that.

There was also a limit to holding out through sheer tenacity.

Breaking another training sword would be unlikely, so it would cost more points. Maybe it was impossible even.

There would be no way for me to win if I wouldn't be able to withstand that next blow.

"How the hell do you plan on beating me, huh? Why don't you show me?"

I didn't have anything like that.

Still.

I wanted to win anyway. Just because there was no way for me to win, that didn't mean I was forbidden from wanting to. I couldn't win, but I still could have the desire to win.

I needed to see him lying under my feet no matter what.

"Ah…"

That was when I realized.

I thought that I shouldn't have come because I would lose anyway.

I knew I would lose, but I had to fight in the hopes of winning.

No, this wasn't even what I wanted. It wasn't even close to the thing I wanted.

There was no way to win, and yet I wanted to win even in this situation where I had no other choice but to lose, I wanted to grasp victory, and I wanted to be certain of my victory.

I now vividly remembered what I had to do.

I caught my breath as I watched that guy approaching.

"How the hell are you going to win?"

He was slowly approaching with a sly smile hanging on his lips.

How?

“Don’t know.”

“What?”

The answer had been decided long ago. I looked at the guy holding his sword.

“I’ll win anyway.”

I was being stubborn in this situation.

I didn’t know how I would win, but I knew that I’d win anyway.

This was just a farce.

“You’re out of your mind.”

Mayarton seemed to think that I had gone crazy because I was pushed to my limits. That was what the other’s faces also told me.

No. That wasn’t it. I realized this by rationally thinking about it, not because I was driven into some extreme state. I just realized how my powers worked.

The name of my power was Self-Suggestion, so I had to apply it to myself. I had to believe in it myself.

It’s not just about wanting to win.

It wasn’t even just a prediction of my own victory.

Even with no chance of winning, I had to constantly think that I was going to win.

I had to really believe it.

That was how it was supposed to be used.

That was the power I had. It wasn’t about what one wanted, desired or longed for.

There was no reason, cause or basis for it, but you had to blindly believe that it would happen. Whining like a child, insisting like an idiot. Only if I completely and whole-heartedly believed that it was going to happen would my power awaken.

If you believed in it well enough, it would happen regardless of the cause or reason. The ability would grant myself power like that.

“Look.”

The most powerful supernatural ability that would eventually evolve into Word Magic.

“I’ll beat you anyway.”

[Awakened – Self-Suggestion]

That was my power.

– Boom!

After getting closer, as if he couldn’t stand looking at me anymore, he lowered his upper body and rushed towards me.

-Bang!

“Wuark!”

I reacted to those movements that I shouldn't be able to react to and smacked him in the face with my sword.

-Thud!

Mayarton fell to the same part of the floor where he had started his rush.

He was down on the ground.

I couldn't feel the pain and wounds all over my body.

I was in an extreme state of exhilaration as I grabbed this shivering bastard's hair.

"Kuh… Urgh…"

He didn't seem to get what happened just now. The reactions around us were the same. It would be unbelievable to see the guy who was barely able to move his body properly until just a while ago to suddenly display such power.

I grabbed his hair and slammed his head back down on the floor.

-Bam!

"Urgh!"

-Bam!

"Gaaark!"

– Boom!

"Kurgh!"

Mayarton's body trembled after I hit his head three times against the floor of the gym. Just as Mr. Epinhauser didn't interfere when I was getting beat up, he didn't intervene when I was smashing Mayarton's head against the gym floor. He was just watching. That was some scary level of composure.

No one knew what was going on.

“Surrender.”

“Huh. Hah… Ho-how… How…”

“You’ll lose anyway if you faint. Do you want me to smash in your head until you faint? Fine by me.”

-Bang!

“Kurgh!”

-Bang! Bang! Bang!

Amidst this complete reversal without rhyme or reason I grabbed Mayarton’s messed up hair again and made him stare straight at me.

“I told you.”

“Uuh… Urgh…”

“I was going to beat you anyway.”

A reality forced to happen.

Self-suggestion was that kind of ability. The greater my absurd belief the stronger my power grew.

My vague belief in my own victory seemed to be just enough to win against Mayarton. The moment I realized how to use it, I managed to believe in this scenario.

Anyway, I was sure I could win.

Neither madness, nor cruelty, nor malice, nor joy could be found in his eyes.

Those eyes were only filled with fear and incomprehension at this situation.

Good.

It was good to be an object of fear.

It was even better as the one who feared me was the guy who had been holding me down and beating me up until now.

“Now, tell me, senior. You’ve been going to Temple two years more than me, you have better physical abilities and your swordsmanship is much better than mine.”

I couldn’t help laughing and shouting.

“Now how about you try telling the first-year students that you’re a fucking third year, huh!”

I could feel the people around me get frightened by my maddened roar.

“Don’t want to? Then how about I’ll make you wake up to the infirmary ceiling then?”

I lifted his head up high to slam him down against the floor again.

“I, I… I lost.”

I was finally able to crush his pride and get him to surrender. Mr. Epinhauser bluntly announced the result.

“I declare Reinhardt as the victor.”

[Event Quest Complete – Duel with Art]

[You have earned 600 achievement points as reward for your victory.]

Then.

With the announcement of my victory everything went dark before me.

CHAPTER 50

Damn it.

I told that guy I would make him see the infirmary's ceiling, but in the end it was me who woke up to it.

"……"

It was after Mr. Epinhauser declared my victory, so the results couldn't have been overturned. This was the infirmary, right? The curtains were drawn so I couldn't tell if someone was around.

Soon, someone opened the curtains and appeared before me.

"You woke up."

"Ah, senior."

It was Adriana. She approached me, put her hand on my forehead and nodded slowly. Did she judge that my condition was okay?

"What happened?"

"You won the duel, junior, but then you suddenly collapsed. This is the dormitory's recovery room."

Recovery room? Was there such a thing? Was Mayarton also here? As I looked around, Adriana shook her head as if she knew what I was looking for.

"That senior is in another recovery room. I wouldn't let both of you use the same room."

I did hit his head quite a lot, so he would be in need of recuperation. Adriana sat down on the bed next to me and sighed.

"Junior, you knew what I wanted to do, right?"

Maybe she was talking about the look she gave me before.

“Yeah, well…”

“I could have fought for you.”

She was asking me why I still insisted on doing such a reckless thing instead of choosing her.

“Were you expecting such nonsense as suddenly awakening your supernatural power at just the right time? Don’t you understand things unless you get beat up?”

Adriana seemed angry.

By the way, they must have already scanned my body once while I was fainted. So they should already know the reason why I became so strangely powerful was because of my supernatural ability.

“Isn’t it fine as long as the results are good?”

“Nonsense. Of course, I heard about your strange aptitudes, junior, but… You did something very reckless.”

I knew I had a latent supernatural power and realized how to awaken it just then. However, to others this might have seemed like I was hitting my head against the floor to break it.

“If it didn’t go well, wouldn’t it have been even worse than losing?”

Adriana didn’t seem to know what to say in response to my reaction as if there was something wrong with that.

“Junior, you still have six years to live in Temple. You just started your first year. You were able to awaken a supernatural power through great coincidence this time, but will you continue to do these kinds of reckless things in the future just to turn your other aptitudes into talents?”

“No, not really…”

Supernatural powers were just special cases, and the rest of the talents I wanted I

could buy with achievement points, so there wouldn't be a reason to do these kinds of things anymore…

"Anyway, don't do such reckless things anymore. Also don't be rude to your seniors just because you won that duel."

"It will probably happen again in the not so far future though…"

I was sure that everyone was wondering if my damn temper would lead me to be cut down this time. Unfortunately for them, I realized how to use my supernatural ability and grabbed the third year senior by his hair and slammed him into the gym floor.

So that would mean for them that Reinhardt has only become more insane.

"Really now. Then I seriously have to scold this junior of mine. Got that?"

Adriana was staring at me terrifyingly. What would happen if this senior scolded me? I didn't know if that scolding would be in the form of words or in the form of a beating.

"Okay. I'll try to restrain myself."

Anyway, I didn't want to be scolded by someone who was so worried about me to the point that she got angry. Just because she got angry with me about something like this didn't necessarily mean that she hated me.

Of course, if I really were to fight the seniors I probably wouldn't get away with it so easily. Mayarton was off guard as well. If that were a real fight, it would have ended in less than 5 seconds.

"But honestly, I'm grateful."

Even if you're thought to be crazy by everyone else, you should be nice to the people who would actually stand up for you.

Adriana sighed at my words.

"I really don't like juniors who go around fighting all the time. I'd rather have a junior that gets along with everyone."

“Then there’s that guy in Class B called Ludwig.”

“You know, you’re supposed to be that kind of person, so do you really have to say that?”

“I guess I got born into the wrong life then.”

“Oh, is that so.”

-Hits!

“Ouch!”

In the end, the angry Adriana hit my head.

I feel like I could make anyone mad with ease. I think that was my real talent here.

* * *

I was treated by the teacher designated to be the nurse in the recovery room. It was only natural that I ended up fainting. I forcibly raised my own strength far exceeding what my original body could handle, so it had reached its limits. Of course, I was able to leave the recovery room pretty quickly as there was no further need for me to recuperate there.

Then, to my dismay, I had a consultation with Mr. Epinhauser.

“……Self-Suggestion…”

Mr. Epinhauser seemed worried about my supernatural power’s awakening during the duel.

“It’s interesting, No. 11. You did say that there had to be an aptitude for supernatural powers among your countless ones, so it should be possible to awaken one. It seems to me that you accepted your senior’s challenge out of necessity… It’s rather ridiculous, but you turned out to be right.”

“Actually, I did this because I wanted something else to happen, but it somehow turned out like this.”

“Luck is also a talent. Just as the other talented students hadn’t necessarily acquired their power through hard work. I do not know if it was mere luck, but you are not allowed to use your ability to attack someone anymore. Unless it’s in special circumstances like a duel. However your ability isn’t an obvious one. The downside to this is that it is hard to recognize and judge. Of course, it might be advantageous for you though.”

Depending on the degree I use my ability at, one might not be able to tell if I strengthened my body or not. It was extremely advantageous for the one who used it, but it was pretty disadvantageous for the teacher who had to make a judgement on it.

“I won’t do anything stupid.”

“Yes, although you seem to be quite violent, I don’t believe you to be an idiot.”

Mr. Epinhauser was still staring at me with his unflinching gaze.

Whenever I met his eyes I always felt like this person’s gaze was utterly terrifying. When he showed me this cold attitude I felt a similar type of fear I felt from Bertus.

“Ms. Rollendria will be quite surprised to hear about you. You can go.”

Ms. Rollandira was referring to the teacher in charge of the supernatural power class.

She’d definitely be surprised as the one who casually said he’d somehow get a supernatrual ability, actually got one.

* * *

Reinhardt awakened his supernatural powers during his duel with his senior.

That rumor seemed to have already spread throughout the class as well as among the seniors. When a first year and a third year fought against each other in a duel, the first year actually awakened their supernatural ability and beat up his senior.

The duel itself probably became the a hot topic around the entire Royal Class before it even started, but now it came out that the first year actually won.

It would have been strange if there weren't any rumors.

Still.

I didn't know it would turn out like this…

"Are you Reinhardt?"

"I heard that duel was no joke?"

"Mayarton, that bastard, should've been beaten some more."

"Oh my god. You're such a little baby! Cute! Can I hug you?"

No, I wasn't a baby. I was still 17. And no matter how I looked at it, I wasn't really the cute type, or was I?

"Should this sister buy you something delicious? Do you like macaroons?"

The First Year Class A dormitory was currently crowded with seniors who came down after hearing the rumors about me.

In a way, this might have been a natural conclusion.

In order to defeat a single first year, a third year forced himself into the fight of a second year as his champion.

At this point, Mayarton would have already been imprinted as trash in the minds of those who weren't all that interested in disciplining the juniors. Not all Class A students were strict about traditions and such.

As soon as they reached their fourth year, many students turned their attention away from such things. So, many of them were already dissatisfied with Mayarton for trying to beat up a first year.

But he even lost.

Therefore, those seniors were bound to develop a certain degree of curiosity and favor towards me, to the same degree they disliked Mayarton.

Also, although I didn't make Reinhardt look super handsome, he was still good looking enough.

It was understandable that those sisters would go: "You're such a cute little baby".

"How can he be so young and already so righteous? You told your seniors not to bully you and your friends anymore if you won, right?"

As the rumor spread around that I participated in duel I was bound to lose anyway to make the seniors stop harrassing my class, it seemed that I now got known as a righteous guy who fought for his friends.

"Ah… Uhm… I did say that……"

"You're so nice."

Of course, my actual classmates who heard the seniors' fussing seemed to doubt their ears.

The seniors were praising Reinhardt, the crazy dog bastard, as a good and nice guy after all. Their expressions showed that some of them seemed to want to fiercely shout, "No, he isn't that kind of guy at all!".

"If anyone comes to bother you again after this, tell me. I'll scold them for you. See? If you have any problem, come straight to the Fifth Year Class A, okay?"

-Rumble! Rumble!

If she was in the fifth year then she was 21 years old. She was a college student sister.

…Of course, I didn't actually see her as an older sister, she was still just a child as well.

She was trying to show off and made a small storm appear in her right hand. What? Why was she doing that?

Since they were seniors, their supernatural abilities couldn't be compared to those of a first year. They told me I should be proud of myself and that there should be more children like me.

My classmates, of course, would never agree to anything they said.

If there were any more children like me, Temple would get destroyed.

Still, if one were to take the rumors at face value, I did seem like just a good little kid.

There were also times when some male seniors would pat my head, saying I did a good job, but there were also some female seniors who simply crossed the line.

“What do I do? I heard you had such a hard life.”

“Ah, yeah, well…”

She seemed to have heard about my origins, so a certain senior girl suddenly hugged me tightly, giving me a headache.

N, no.

Hey!

Don’t do this!

Although my mind was still the same as it was before, my body was currently a healthy 17 year old!

“Oh my, good that you were able to get into Temple.”

Don’t do this! Th, this wasn’t how this was supposed to go!

When they found out that I was actually just a beggar from the streets, they couldn’t help but marvel at how I was able to grow up to be so upright in that kind of environment.

The seniors had that huge misunderstanding about me, to the point where I couldn’t do anything about it anymore.

Tired.

I was really tired.

I ended up becoming a star at Temple just because of one duel.

* * *

Regardless of the misunderstandings the seniors had about me, the looks the others gave me after they returned were a little different from before.

Probably because they knew I awakened my supernatural ability.

They might have also felt something from my actions, fighting so hard even though I was put into such a helpless situation by that senior.

The people who hated me, Cayer, Erich and Kono Lint, looked at me then went past me with their eyes tightly closed. They felt like they were no match for me, not only in terms of skills, but also in terms of mental strength.

It wasn't because I fought so well, it was because of my mental strength that didn't allow me to give up no matter how badly I got beaten up. Eventually, they would get more skilled and mentally strong, but right now they were just kids. No wonder I looked weird to them.

And.

"……"

Harriet de Saint-Owan was looking at me, turned her head and passed by me without giving me a single glance.

Well, that certainly wasn't what I expected.

Wouldn't this have been the perfect time to tell me something like: "You should have gotten beat up more"?

"Hey!"

"Wha, what！"

When I called out to her, she stopped as if she was waiting for that, and looked at me angrily. I could see that she was blushing.

“Don’t you have anything to say to me?”

Harriet frowned when I asked her that.

“There’s no such thing though? What would I have to say to a bastard like you? Oh, yes, yes. You should have been hit a bunch more, but then you ended up using that supernatural power of yours like a coward just to win.”

I got the exact response I wanted to hear.

“Really? Weren’t you rather restless when you watched me get beat up though?”

“Wha, what?”

Her face got even redder because she didn’t think I was looking at her before.

“I saw you stamping your feet with a pale face, you know?”

I told her with a grim smile. In fact, she kept looking towards me and Mr. Epinhauser in the hopes that he might stop this fight.

I was able to see all that, even while I was getting beat up. To be exact, that was the only thing I could do at that moment.

Anyway, I saw her getting more and more restless, wanting Mr. Epinhauser to bring an end to all that, but he didn’t.

So there was just one conclusion.

“Were you worried about me? How cute.”

“Absolutely not! Never ever, nope! I, I. Wh, why would I, I be wo, wo, worried about the li, likes of you? Hah! Hah! It was so refreshing!”

Judging by her red hot face, it seemed like she was absolutely worrying about me. In the end, there was not a single person who wouldn’t feel sympathy if someone got beat up so pitifully.

I went up to her and put my hands on her cheeks, squeezing them.

The cheeks of that high-and-mighty princess of a Grand Duchy felt like two steamed buns.

“!”

She wasn’t even able to scream that was how dumbfounded she was. She didn’t even imagine someone would dare do this to her.

“Leeh! Leeh goh! Shto!”

It was really, really cute that she got surprised by me doing something as ridiculous as this. When I let go, this completely red-faced girl started trembling all over her body in total bewilderment.

“Ho, how dare, dare you touch my body! Someone like you? How absurd. How. How. How could a beggar… How…”

She was so angry and embarrassed that she wasn’t even able to scream properly. Her pupils were shaking very strongly, one might think they were affected by an earthquake or something. This time she didn’t seem that angry, she was more dumbfounded and surprised.

Not only did I dare touch her precious face, but I even squeezed her cheeks and laughed at her.

She was the cutest when she was like this.

It seemed like she was trying to deny reality. She probably was thinking something like: “This can’t be happening to me”, or something.

“Hu, hnnk…… Sobsob ！ Sniff ！ Knnrk ！ ”

However.

Contrary to my expectations, she started to cry.

“Hu, huh…”

That wasn’t it.

“Why are you doing this to me? You bastard, why are you picking on me? Why do you bully me like this? Stop it! Stop teasing meee!”

Wha, what do I do…?

PDF by: traitorAIZEN